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A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF THE DICHOTOMY
BETWEEN EDUCATIONAL POLICY
AND EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ON LEARNING THEORY

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Interdisciplinary Studies:
Integrative Studies Option

by
Karen Joy Eakes

June 2000


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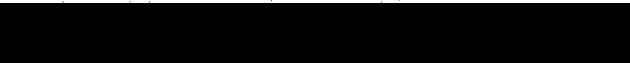
June 2000

Approved by:



Sam Crowell, Chair, Education

6-8-00
Date



Renate Caine, Education

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ABSTRACT

This study explores and exposes the dichotomy that currently exists between educational policy and research in learning theory. It also investigates the impact of current policies on practicing educators and shares their perceptions on how policies are affecting them, their students and their classroom practices.

Our schools are inundated with problems, both educational and social. There is a great deal of public criticism of and dissatisfaction with our schools. It is of vital importance that a more effective public education system be developed to meet the needs of all students and to satisfy the issues of public accountability.

It is the premise of this study that a good deal of the problems related to our schools today are the result of the contradictions that exist between policy and the research in learning theory. A more cohesive and coherent program of policy development that supports rather than hinders genuine learning needs to be implemented in order to encourage the incorporation of more effective and highly researched educational orientations and strategies into our schools.

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To Jim,
who lovingly supported me
in every way,
and helped me to do what I needed to do.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The vital importance of quality public education for our citizens and our nation has historically been a fundamental supposition of our democratic government. An educated citizenry forms the foundation of a democratic nation, a burgeoning economy, and a healthy and stable society. In addition, all parents hold the hope and expectation of a quality education for their children. However, in recent years public education has fallen under a great deal of scrutiny and criticism.

This discontent and concern is universally acknowledged. It is one of the major issues on the political agenda nationwide and is an on-going topic in the media. There is concern about how our students measure up against students from other nations. The business community complains that students are not being adequately prepared for the work force and colleges and universities express concern about the number of students arriving at their doors requiring remediation of basic skills. Many parents seeking the best possible education for their children are turning to the options of home schooling or private schools.

It is commonly conceded that there are enormous problems impacting our schools. In many locations there are over-crowded conditions and inadequate facilities. There are gross inequities in funding and a shortage of well prepared teachers. In this multi-cultural and multi-lingual nation, the schools are expected to successfully educate a very diverse population. In addition, the tremendous societal problems of our nation permeate our schools. This reality brings the added challenge of attempting to educate children who are often more concerned about survival than learning. With increased focus on the perceived failings of our schools, added to the many problems they are attempting to address, it is understandable that an aura of anxiety and fear has developed.

Historically, our schools have been operated and controlled locally. However, in the current atmosphere of alarm and panic, a new pattern has developed. The federal government has become more involved and more directive in educational policy affecting individual states. In turn, the states have responded by imposing increasingly numerous and restrictive legislative mandates on their school districts.

Bean and Apple (1995) express sympathy and concern for the predicament in which public schools find themselves. They are asked to educate everyone successfully and then are blamed for the economic and social issues that make it very difficult to do so. There is a great deal of rhetoric about the importance of local control of schools, when in fact legislatures are defining the standards and testing procedures that will be used to measure success or failure. Within a very diverse culture, narrow and limited curricula are still a fact of life. The demand for instruction in critical thinking skills goes hand in hand with mandated programs and methodology that infringes on the need or desire for students to think or make sense of what they are being asked to do (p.3).

In specific response to the Goals 2000 legislation, Purpel (1995) states great concern about the degree to which the federal government is starting to regulate education through "voluntary" legislation. He sees it as a serious infringement on "teacher autonomy, community involvement and student participation" (p.165) and a dramatic move toward "centralized rigidity, uniformity, and politicization of education" (p.165).

Darling-Hammond (1997) also deplores the hundreds of pieces of legislation that have been recently enacted to improve schools. She refers to these efforts as "merely symbolic change" (p.41) and maintains that genuine reform will fail unless it is built on a foundation of teaching knowledge and structural change. She contends there are two conflicting theories of reform that are effecting education today. The first is that of tightened control or legislation resulting in more tests, more courses, more curricula and more effort from school employees. This approach is enforced through the use of rewards and sanctions. The second theory she describes is directed toward improvement of instruction through teacher education, more collaborative organizations, improved assessment practices and decentralizing school decision-making (p.42). The tension between these two theories or approaches to educational improvement is very real and critical to understanding the fractured state of our educational system today.

As has been stated previously, it is imperative that we develop and maintain effective and strong public schools. All children deserve equal opportunities to learn and to develop their potentials. Our students are our

future. The conflict arrives over the method to be used to accomplish these goals.

At the present time, the predominant method is through legislative mandates incorporating uniform standards of achievement and high stakes standardized testing to measure this achievement. Another method, largely ignored or minimized, is the consistent and effective implementation of the enormous base of research that has been done in recent years in the area of cognitive learning theory. Caine and Caine maintain that "we desperately need to change our collective thinking and to take advantage of the research in learning, including the neurosciences. Understanding how humans learn needs to become the cornerstone for understanding how to teach" (1997b, p.v).

Through thorough and deep understanding and implementation of researched instructional practices, many believe a positive change in classrooms around the country can occur. Toward the end of my twenty-seven years in the classroom, I experienced a gradual and subtle movement toward standardization of learning and control of instruction. I also experienced a growing dissonance between my beliefs about children, teaching and learning and the direction that the educational bureaucracy was

taking. No longer is this movement subtle. It is a national phenomenon and although very drastic, it has been described by many as just another "swing in the pendulum." This may be, but the repercussions of this movement may be too harmful and extreme to be written off so blithely.

This qualitative study is founded on the need to explore and expose the dichotomy that exists between educational research on cognitive learning theory and the actual policy decisions and mandates that are being enacted by state departments of education. It is an applied research study instituted by the necessity for more coherence and congruence between educational research and educational policy, to more effectively serve our students and build stronger schools.

It is contended that the great majority of legislative policy reforms and mandates that direct the instruction and curricula in our schools at present are detrimental to genuine learning and improved performance of our students. Moffett echoes this opinion when he states that, "In my experience, the biggest single stumbling block to educational improvement are [sic] the state legislatures, because they wield far too much power in education for the little they understand about it" (1994, p.120). It is also

strongly contended that if the available research on cognitive learning theory were actively and consistently incorporated into instructional and curricular programs in our schools, student progress, success, and pleasure in learning would greatly increase.

Lastly, this study hopes to clarify the effect this dichotomy in theories and approaches has had on the educational community, most specifically, our teachers. What is this situation doing to our teachers? How are they feeling about this conflict and how are they coping? What do they see happening to their students?

In the unfolding of this study I briefly review the history of recent federal government legislation that has been responsible for the enactment of the current standards and high stakes testing movement. I then review the specific policies enacted by the departments of education in California and Alaska that are currently impacting the schools in those two states. These states were selected due to the need to limit the study and also because I taught in and have teaching colleagues in both states.

The literature review concentrates on the recent findings in cognitive learning theory and how these findings can be applied to instruction, curriculum,

assessment, and infrastructure of the schools. Through this investigation, the dichotomy between recommended researched theories and practices and the current practices in schools that are supported and directed through policy mandate are clarified.

Lastly, I share the results of in-depth interviews with a selection of teachers as to how these conflicts are impacting them, their students and their classroom practices. Through the investigation of their attitudes, beliefs, and experiences, and exploration of the research findings, I draw some conclusions and ideas for further thought and study.

CHAPTER TWO: POLICY REVIEW

In reviewing educational policy, four areas are discussed. The first is a general orientation to policy formation. Then there is an overview of major federal policy formation over the past two decades. Lastly, there is a review of pertinent current policy within the states of California and Alaska.

Orientation to Policy Development

As a starting point in the discussion of education policies, it is important to have some understanding of the forces and factors that influence the establishment of policy. According to Marshall (1991) there is a constant tension for policy makers between the need to insure quality and control while still guaranteeing choice and equity. She makes the point that these factors are rarely addressed in a balanced manner and that policy is inherently value and culture-laden. Policy is greatly influenced by the political, economic, cultural and social trends of the time in which it is established. According to Rizvi, as quoted by Marshall, the dominant culture tends to submerge the needs of sub-cultures in policy decisions as "policies are administrative allocation of values, given legitimacy and authority in particular cultural context"

(p.15). While policy decisions often do not reflect this obligation, Marshall maintains that "good decision making can occur only after a wide search identifies the needs and concerns of all the people who will be affected by a decision" (p.14).

Gallagher and Gallagher (1991) discuss the policy analysis framework that was developed by McDonnell and Elmore at the Rand Corporation and at Michigan State University. They refer to the framework as a "means of identifying and understanding factors that influence the choice behavior of policy makers" (p.160). In their discussion they identify four specific types of policies and also the two major factors that influence the decision to legislate a particular type. Briefly, the four types are described as mandates, or "rules that govern the performance of individuals and agencies," inducements, which "are transfers of money to individuals or agencies in return for valued things or performance," capacity-builders which "are transfers of money for the purposes of investment" and lastly, system-changers which "are transfers of authority within agencies to alter the system" (p.160). The choice of which kind of policy to develop and legislate is determined by the perceived problem and the

available resources or limiting factors that exist. As this study unfolds, it is important to keep in mind these different factors concerning policy development.

Federal Education Policy

During the past forty years our nation has weathered continual and alarming reports concerning the failings of our educational system. The reports have been spurred by events outside the system that resulted in a major response from within. Sputnik in the late fifties caused great alarm about our failure to keep up in the space program and resulted in a focus on improved and increased math and science instruction and a major revamping of our educational priorities. In the 60s, with national concern around civil rights and segregation, our schools were called upon to be instrumental in solving those problems. As our schools became more diverse and integrated in student populations, alarm began to develop about falling test scores and the potential repercussions for the U.S. economy.

Then in 1983 came the publication of *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*. This report caused tremendous reaction all over the country and set the tone for the following decade of educational concern and reform

efforts. Describing our educational system as "a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people" (Stedman, 1994), the National Commission on Excellence set the scene for national panic. This document maintained that we were not providing our nation's youth with the necessary skills as evidenced by falling test scores and increases in illiteracy rates. The states responded with massive legislative action including "mandates, accountability directives and various other changes in educational policies" (Bell, 1993, p.593).

Ten years after the fact, Terrel Bell, the Secretary of Education at the time of the publishing of *A Nation at Risk*, made apologetic efforts to justify the report. He maintained the report was done in an attempt to rally the American people around their schools and was never intended to send a message of failure concerning educators or "for teachers to receive the blame that was heaped upon them" (1993, p.593). In a reflective mode he admitted

The top-down initiatives by the states failed to come anywhere near to meeting the expectations of those who sponsored the legislation. And we soon learned that gains in student achievement, declines in high school dropout rates, and other desired outcomes cannot be attained simply by changing standards and mandating procedures and practices. (p.594)

He also stated that for true reform to occur it would require a massive, system-wide effort that would need to include parents and communities. Education needed to become everyone's responsibility and learning needed to be nurtured "inside and outside the school. We must become a learning society" (p.596).

The intense and negative attention focused on our schools continued throughout the 80s. In 1989, President Bush, the "Education President," gathered the governors together at an "Education Summit." During this meeting, they developed and adopted six national goals to serve as a focus for the reform movement ahead and "provide direction toward excellence for education in America" (Flood & Lapp, 1993, p.58). The six national goals as reported by the U.S. Department of Education were

1. All children in America will start school ready to learn.
2. The high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90%.
3. American students will leave Grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter, including English, mathematics, science, history, and geography; students will learn to use their minds well so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our modern economy.
4. American students will be the first in the world in science and mathematics achievement.
5. Every adult American will be literate and will

- possess the knowledge and skill necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
6. Every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning. (Flood & Lapp, p.58)

By 1991, *America 2000: An Education Strategy* was developed as a means of attaining the national goals. During the debate about *America 2000* there was a great deal of discussion about how to accomplish the national goals. Ravitch stated that there were three objectives. The first was to encourage each community to adopt the national goals and to develop local strategies to work on and report on progress toward these goals. Second was the creation of many "break-the-mold" schools as models for emulation. The third goal was the development of voluntary "world class" standards and achievement tests (1993, p.768). Ravitch maintained that "the object was not to create higher hurdles for students, but to demystify what was to be learned and to help all students reach higher levels of learning" (p.769).

The New Standards Project, an outgrowth of *America 2000*, was aimed at developing national standards and assessments. National standards were to be developed in three areas: curriculum content standards, student performance standards, and school delivery standards. In

the words of Lauren Resnick, director of the New Standards Project, the goal of the project was the creation of "standards and assessments to help bring about better student outcomes -- a different quality and higher level of student achievement" (O'Neil, 1993, p.17). She also spoke in favor of an assessment system that "heavily engages teachers in task development, scoring, and using the results to improve curriculum and instruction" (p.18).

There were many critics of the national standards movement. The issues of widespread poverty, disintegrating family structures, growing numbers of "at risk" students, increasing evidence of violence and drugs in our society, and growing numbers of racially and culturally diverse student populations forced many to question the realistic nature of national goals (Howe, 1992; Orlich, 1994; Riley, 1992). Other critics, such as prominent educators Elliot Eisner and Linda Darling-Hammond (Flood & Lapp, 1993), charged that the standards were an oversimplification of the actual needs of our schools and our society. Moffett observed that "America 2000 was launched by the governors and the president with virtually no forum in Congress, the public, or educators. By the time most people knew what

was happening, they could address only the question of how, not whether" (1994, p.135).

Another problem that was not addressed by the national standards movement was the great disparity and inequity that existed in school funding. Howe (1992) commented that America 2000 "doesn't mention a central fact of life: maldistribution of education revenues from state to state, district to district, school to school." Jonathan Kozol, another critic of the tremendous inequalities in education funding, responded to *America 2000* with total disdain.

Kozol, as quoted by Donohue (1994), said it consisted of recycled cliches and:

The only really new items in it are a proposal for a national exam, which is purposeless...and a poisonous recommendation that we give public school money to children to attend private schools, which is really an item of extremist right-wing ideology.

Another widely shared concern was the influence of business and corporate interests on the development of educational policy (Berliner and Biddle, 1995; Moffett, 1994; Kohn, 1999). Presidential commissions were often chaired by executives of large companies. There were countless reports on American schooling released by such agencies as The Business Coalition for Education Reform, the Business Roundtable, the National Alliance of Business,

and the Committee of Economic Development. The reports coming out of these agencies sounded strikingly similar and were filled with words such as "tough," "competitive," "world-class," "accountability," "standards," and "raising the bar." Kohn found it "disturbing that the government tends to ride in business's wake, issuing reports that contain remarkably similar language, essentially the same recommendations, and the identical objectives" (1999, p.15).

Worth noting is another national study on the condition of education that was initiated by then secretary of energy, James Watkins, in 1990. In his own words, it was launched in an effort to "pick our society up by its bootstraps" (Tanner, 1993, p.290). Known as the Sandia Report, the results of the findings were withheld from publication for over two years as it was subjected to review by officials of the National Science Foundation and the National Center for Education Statistics. It was believed by many (Stedman, 1994) that this was done because the findings did not support the Bush administration's educational policy and reform agenda.

Robert Huelkamp (1993), one of the three senior researchers from Sandia National Laboratories assigned to

the research project, stated that the study "sought to provide an objective, 'outsider's' look at U.S. education." To the surprise of the researchers, "on nearly every measure, we found steady or slightly improving trends." Using much of the same data as the Department of Education and the National Science Foundation, the researchers arrived at noticeably different conclusions. Tanner stated that "the data had never before been put together effectively for purposes of giving a balanced and constructive view of American public education" (1993, p.292).

After finalizing their report in the spring of 1991, the researchers found themselves at the center of debate and controversy over its contents. Among the findings were

1. SAT scores of every ethnic or racial group had been improving or at least maintained since the early 1970s. Lowered aggregate scores were the result of increasing numbers of students taking the test.
 2. Performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress tests had been improving.
 3. High school drop-out rates had been declining for all groups except Hispanics and their numbers were impacted by recent immigrants who had not completed high school in their native country.
- (Tanner, 1993, pp.292 & 293)

There were other interesting conclusions, but probably the most profound was that of the changing demographic

makeup of the student body of our nation's schools.

Huelskamp (1993) stated that:

Immigration was higher in the 1980s than in any decade this century except the first, and projections for the 1990s are even higher...Over 150 languages are represented in schools nationwide; figures near this number occur in single large districts.

Among the researchers' recommendations was the need for the nation to clarify necessary changes and find the leadership required to bring about these changes. They emphasized the importance of improving the performance of minority and disadvantaged learners and the need to adjust to the reality of large immigrant populations in the schools. They also stated the need to improve the status and respect for elementary and secondary educators and to upgrade the data regarding education (Huelskamp, 1993). Additionally, the Sandia Report raised some concerns about the national tendency to subordinate school interests to those of industrial and economic interests (Tanner, 1993).

Briefings on the report were conducted with officials of the U.S. Department of Education. Diane Ravitch, then assistant secretary for education research and improvement, and others in the department, demanded that the report be reviewed for accuracy by the National Science Foundation and the National Center for Education Statistics. This

process held up publication of the report for two years and successfully defused the controversy that surrounded the findings.

Nevertheless, Bush's *America 2000: An Education Strategy* never made it through Congress (Donohue, 1994). Evidently, the issues of national standards and assessments, and of school vouchers, had been too controversial for congressional approval. However, the Clinton administration followed up with *Public Law 103-227 - Goals 2000 Educate America Act* which after a year long period of debate and adjustment, was passed by Congress in March of 1994. It included the original six national goals and two additional goals to upgrade teacher preparation and parent involvement in school reform. There was also more emphasis placed on the "opportunity to learn" standards versus the content and performance standards that had received so much focus under America 2000. This was an equity issue and one of great importance to many members of Congress. As Representative Major R. Owens, Democrat from New York stated in the March 23, 1994 issue of *Education Week*:

There are no ruby slippers in American education: Merely setting higher goals and exhorting schools to meet them will not magically create the world-class system we need...Once states have determined

what they expect all students to know, they must then take the next step to identify what every school needs to effectively impart that knowledge to students. (Donohue, 1994)

Goals 2000 legislation was a serious move to get the states underway in their efforts to improve schools. As stated in the forward of the act:

Each state government will design and submit a State Improvement Plan that shows how it coordinates efforts and resources across its jurisdiction so that all of these are focused on building better educational processes and outcomes for all students. (Summary of Goals 2000, 1994)

According to Donohue (1994), the real content of the legislation was the impetus provided to states in the form of \$400 million in grants. This money was to be awarded to states that submitted plans for working toward the three goals of standards for curriculum, student performance, and opportunity-to-learn.

Tanner (1998) theorized that the national standards movement is directly the result of the failure of the government to make good on the national goals that grew out of *America 2000*. The number one goal in that strategy plan was that by the year 2000, all children would start school ready to learn. In fact, to make this goal happen would have required tremendous investment and a massive social effort on the part of the government. With a touch of

sarcasm, Tanner suggested that instead, they have "transferred responsibility and accountability to 'Mrs. Jones and her kindergartners'" (1998, p.347).

California Policies

Following the passage of Goals 2000 federal legislation in 1994, the California legislature passed Assembly Bill 265. This bill called for a commission to develop rigorous academic content and performance standards in all subject areas, for all grade levels, by October of 1997. The issue of opportunity to learn standards was not addressed in this legislation.

In the introductory message to the English-language arts content standards, the State Board of Education (SBE) and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SSPI) stated that California was going "beyond reform. We are redefining the state's role in public education" (English-Language Arts Content Standards, 1997). For the first time, the State was defining the explicit content that students needed to know at each grade level. With this mastery of content, California students and schools were predicted to become equal to the best educational systems in other states and nations. It was stated that the content "is attainable by all students, given sufficient

time, except for those few who have severe disabilities...."

(English-Language Arts Content Standards, 1997). With a student population that was approximately 25% English language learners, it was decided that:

The standards must not be altered for English language learners, because doing so would deny these students the opportunity to reach them. Rather, local education authorities must seize this chance to align specialized education programs for English language learners with the standards so that all children in California are working toward the same goal. (Standards, 1997)

According to Susan Ohanian, one third of the students who enter ninth grade in California do not graduate four years later. In biting criticism of the California standards she stated that "the California State Board of Education, in its wisdom, has passed a set of standards that seems intent on killing the kids off before they reach ninth grade" (1999, p.x).

In a February 1999 news release, Delaine Eastin, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, stated support for Governor Gray Davis' statewide accountability plan for education. In that release she contended, "Up to now, we have had only two legs of a three legged stool. This commitment to move beyond standards and assessment to accountability is the most important step" (Eastin Supports Governor, 1999).

On the heels of this pronouncement, in April of 1999, the legislature passed several definitive education bills. The first was Senate Bill 1X -- Public Schools Accountability Act of 1999. This bill created a statewide accountability system, holding every school accountable for making gains in student achievement every year. The SSPI, with the assistance of an advisory committee, became responsible for developing an Academic Performance Index, or API, to measure the performance of schools and to demonstrate the "comparable improvement in academic achievement by all numerically significant ethnic and socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroups within schools" (SB 1X PSAA, 1999).

Initially, the major indicator of API improvement was to be the annual Standardized Testing and Reporting System or STAR based on the Stanford 9 Test. Eventually other indicators or comparisons were to include attendance rates for pupils and staffs, and graduation rates. At all times however, the STAR was to comprise at least 60% of the API. The API was stated to have two major purposes, to measure growth of school performance over time and to rank schools on an annual basis. (Framework for Academic Performance Index, 1999).

The API was arranged on a scale of 200 to 1000 with 800 arbitrarily established as the goal for all schools to aim toward. The 1999 STAR test results found 627 to be the State average with 5,951 schools falling below the 800 goal and 779 meeting or exceeding it (Kerr, 2000, A-11). The minimum growth target per year was eventually established to be five percent of the gap that existed between a school's score and the 800 level rating set as the goal for all schools (Calfee, 2000, A-18).

Those schools attaining their growth targets would become eligible for monetary and non-monetary awards under the Governor's Performance Award Program and another \$96 million dollars was to become available for reform programs for schools failing to reach their growth targets (SB 1X-PSAA, 1999). Schools continuing to fail to meet their growth targets in the year 2000/2001 would be required to hold public meetings to alert their communities to their lack of progress and governing boards were to be assigned to assist the schools.

In the event a school failed to succeed after two full years, the SSPI would "assume all the legal rights, duties, and powers of the governing board with respect to that school..., (and) shall reassign the principal of that school

subject to findings..."(SB 1X-PSAA, 1999). The SSPI would also have the responsibility to take one of the following actions:

1. Revise attendance options allowing students to attend any public school on space available basis;
2. Allow parents to apply to SBE to establish a charter school;
3. Assign management of the school to a college, university, county office of education, or other educational institution;
4. Reassign other certified employees;
5. Renegotiate a new collective bargaining agreement;
6. Reorganize the school;
7. Close the school. (SB 1X-PSAA, 1999)

As an incentive for teachers to work toward API improvement, AB 1114, The Certified Staff Performance Incentive Act, was passed in June of 1999. It provided "one-time performance bonuses to teachers and other certified staff in underachieving schools" (Plan for the Implementation of AB 1114, 1999). The maximum amount allocated was to be \$25,000 per certified staff member. Underachieving schools were defined as those performing below the 50th percentile on the API. In order for teachers and other certified staff members in these schools to qualify for the bonuses, their STAR scores would have to "significantly improve beyond the five-percent annual growth target in the API" (Plan for Implementation of AB

1114, 1999). The SBE was to define what "significant improvement" would mean and the allocation of these funds was to begin in November of 2000.

A second education bill passed in April of 1999 was SB 2X, the High School Exit Exam. In this bill, a high school exit exam in language arts and math aligned to the state content standards was to be developed and approved by October of 2000. It was to be in effect by the 2003/2004 school year and students would have to pass this exam in order to graduate with a diploma. They would be able to start taking the exam in the 10th grade and could pass it section by section. English language learners could defer the requirement for up to two years until completion of six months of instruction in reading, writing and comprehension in English. Districts were required to offer "supplemental instruction to students who were not demonstrating sufficient progress toward passing the exam" (SB 2X-High School Exit Exam, 1999).

In a newspaper article reporting on the exit exam, there was concern expressed by educators that it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to develop a "fair exit test for a state with such a diverse population" (Zwerling, 2000, B-4). Rick McClure, a school board member from

Fontana, stated the possibility "that when large numbers of kids fail the test, no one will look at whether the standards were realistic to begin with" (B-4) and he also noted the concern that as with other standardized tests, "you're going to see a huge disparity in the state between schools in wealthy communities and those in poor communities" (B-4).

Another influential bill that was introduced and passed in April of 1999 was AB 2X, Reading Programs: Elementary School Intensive Reading Program. It established six separate programs that were designed to increase student reading achievement. Among other monetary provisions, this bill appropriated \$75 million for K-4 reading instruction statewide and was directed specifically to support "intensive reading programs" (AB 2X-Reading Programs, 1999). It also established California Reading Professional Development Institutes with the goal of training 6,000 teacher participants in direct instruction. This orientation had been established in 1996 when the California Department of Education had released *Teaching Reading, A Balanced, Comprehensive Approach to Teaching Reading in Prekindergarten Through Grade Three*. The essential components of this program stated the importance

of a balanced approach to instruction, yet the document itself placed great emphasis on the development of phonemic awareness and included Stanovich's (1980) orientation that "research reveals that only poor and disabled readers rely on context for word identification" (Teaching Reading, 1996).

There has been noted criticism (Kohn, 1999; Ohanian, 1999) of California's position surrounding the establishment of acceptable and unacceptable teaching methodology. The issue of the phonics/whole language debate was handled very assertively by the State when politicians "succeeded in requiring people who train teachers to take what is basically a phonics loyalty oath" (Kohn, 1999, p.9). Yetta Goodman, a highly recognized name in reading research and instruction, did not apply to provide professional development in the State as she was "banned in California" (Ohanian, 1999, p.99). Ohanian, along with other noted literacy experts such as Connie Weaver, Patrick Shannon, Shelly Harwayne, and Margaret Moustafa were also rejected as potential inservice presenters, evidently because their instructional orientations were not acceptable (Ohanian, 1999).

In 1998, the California legislature passed AB 1626, Pupil Promotion and Retention. According to this legislation, the SBE and the SSPI were to establish minimum levels of pupil performance on the STAR test in reading, English-language arts and mathematics for grade level promotion by January of 1999. Local districts were to develop retention policies that conformed to these legislative requirements and retention was to be decided on the basis of either results of the STAR based on the minimum levels of proficiency, or a pupil's grades and other indicators of achievement (Key elements of AB 1626, 1998). If retention was considered, but not carried out, the classroom teacher was required to put in writing the reasons for deciding against retention and also to recommend appropriate interventions for the student.

To summarize, during the past five years, the California legislature, State Board of Education and State Department of Education have developed and enforced different mandates and inducements in the search for educational excellence and accountability. They have enacted statewide grade-level content standards for all major academic areas. Performance standards have not yet been put into place. They have incorporated a standardized

means of assessing academic achievement (STAR) and developed a means to measure (API) improvement. On the basis of the test results, they have also ranked the schools throughout the State regarding how they "stack up" against each other. Monetary incentives have been allocated to encourage schools and teachers to work harder toward raising test scores. A high school exit exam to measure the right to receive a diploma has been instituted. In addition, they have directed some specific instructional orientations to be used in the schools and they have also developed a means for deciding on the promotion or retention of students from grade to grade throughout the State.

Alaska Policies

Alaska also responded to Goals 2000 legislation with a statewide program for educational improvement and accountability. The Alaska Quality Schools Initiative was established as the structural framework for the development of educational guidelines and reform in the State of Alaska. In a newspaper editorial, Rick Cross, commissioner of the Department of Education and Early Development, referred to the Quality Schools Initiative as "the best

shot Alaska has ever had to improve its schools" (Cross, 2000, A-12).

The Initiative was made up of several components including required standards in core academic subjects and a system of tests and assessments to ensure that students were able to meet the standards. However, it also included standards for Cultural Responsiveness and Employability. In addition there were standards for professional educators, both teachers and administrators, and standards specifically defining the process of developing quality schools. Another component of the Initiative spoke to the importance of developing partnerships between schools, parents, businesses and communities.

The content standards for the State of Alaska were developed in ten core academic areas and defined what Alaskans wanted "students to know and be able to do as a result of their public schooling" (Content Standards for Alaska Students, 1995). They were adopted by the Alaska State Board of Education (ASBE) as "voluntary" guidelines for Alaska's schools. It was stated that with the development of the content standards, the "focus has shifted from what goes into our education system to what comes out of it" (Content Standards, 1995). It was also

predicted that the standards would give students and teachers a clear target, focus energy and resources on the "bottom line" of student achievement, and provide a tool for judging how well students were learning and schools were performing.

Performance standards were adopted in January of 1999 and were aligned with the content standards. The performance standards were developed specifically for mathematics, writing and reading and were divided into four benchmarks that provided general periods for students to demonstrate successful performance. The benchmarks were established at four age ranges: five to seven, eight to ten, eleven to fourteen and fifteen to eighteen.

Another section of the Alaska State standards addressed Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools. These standards were to provide a "basis against which schools can determine the extent to which they are attending to the cultural well-being of the students in their care" (Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools, 1998). They were adopted in February of 1998 and included specific standards for students, for educators, for curriculum, and for schools and contained clear and detailed performance indicators.

In September of 1998, Alaska Employability Standards were adopted. These were to be used in conjunction with the academic content standards to "ensure Alaska students have the skills and knowledge necessary to be good citizens, good parents, good workers and most of all, life-long learners" (Alaska Employability Standards, 1998). These included basic and thinking skills, personal and interpersonal qualities, and knowledge of information systems and technology.

As part of the Alaska Quality Schools Initiative, students were required to undergo a variety of standardized assessments to determine if they were successfully meeting the academic standards. These included Alaska Benchmark exams at grades three, six, and eight and the California Achievement Test at grades four and seven. In order to graduate with a diploma, students would also have to pass the Alaska High School Graduation Qualifying Examination (HSGQE).

The HSGQE was scheduled to be initiated with the class of 2002 and based on the performance standards in reading, writing and math. A committee was charged with overseeing the writing of the exam, being sure that it measured what it was intended to measure and that it was bias-free. The

test was to be taken in the spring of the 10th grade and offered every semester from then on. There was no time limit for the test and special courses were to be designed to assist students having difficulty passing the exam. Students could take the exam for up to three years after they left high school and there was some accommodation developed for special education students and English language learners.

The Alaska Quality Schools Initiative also included standards for quality schools and teachers. Among other things, the school standards encouraged collaboration and the use of research. They addressed the importance of multiple assessment measures, the need for on-going and continuous staff development, and the significance of community involvement in the schools. The teacher standards included the coherence of philosophy and practice, an understanding of how students learn, respect for individual and cultural differences, a firm knowledge of content and assessment strategies, the establishment of creative and engaging learning environments and partnerships with parents and community.

In summary, the Quality Schools Initiative addressed a wide spectrum of issues that impact schools. It included

content and performance standards for students and measures for assessment of learning that hold students accountable for their learning. However, the Initiative also recognized the importance of other aspects of education including cultural responsiveness and employability. In addition, the importance of establishing standards for educators and schools was also acknowledged within this Initiative.

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review presents the educational themes of curriculum, instruction, assessment and infrastructure. In each area, the practice as generally seen today is reviewed and then some of the transformational approaches recommended by research and educational theorists is presented.

Curriculum

Curriculum is one of the three key components of the educational program. It has traditionally consisted of a sequenced list of items to be taught, developed with specific learning outcomes in mind and standardized for all learners. It has been established prior to and separate from instruction and transmitted to the learner through the teacher or textbook. Doll (1993) uses a machine metaphor to explain this phenomenon, with the teacher as driver and the student as passenger, or worse, as the vehicle. There has been a commonly accepted assumption that if the curriculum was standardized, it would also be possible to standardize the learning that would occur. Clinchy (1997) quotes Csikszentmihalyi, Rathunde, and Whalen's analysis of this fallacy:

The problem with our technologically inspired views of education is that we have come to expect

learning to be a function of the rationality of the information provided. In other words, we assume that if the material is well organized and logically presented, students will learn it. Nothing is farther from the fact. (p.69)

Often, curriculum is purchased, thereby leaving teachers and students totally out of the selection process. According to Moffett, "buying curriculum plays havoc with learning and impedes needed change as much as any other single factor" (1994, p.88). Eisner (1985) also writes that the practice of developing "teacher-proof" curriculum has the effect of demeaning teachers and weakening their professional role in the classroom. When curriculum decisions are made at district and state levels, teachers are "de-skilled" as they become mere implementers of others' ideas (Beane and Apple, 1995).

Another characteristic of the traditional approach to curriculum that has received a great deal of criticism is that of "coverage" (Kohn, 1999; Gardner, 1993; Mayher, 1990; Wink, 1997; Zemelman, Daniels and Hyde, 1993). Gardner, as quoted by Kohn, refers to "coverage as the single greatest enemy of understanding" (1999, p.60). Coverage undermines real thinking and therefore "it becomes essential to abandon the misguided effort to 'cover everything'" (Gardner, 1993, p.191). Gardner recommends the

foreshortening of curriculum to insure understanding.

According to Mayher, the tendency to believe that "more is better" has never been seriously examined and much of what is taught is done so out of tradition rather than thoughtfulness (p.65).

Mayher also suggests that our traditional fragmented curriculum is a means of controlling learning (p.205). By cutting the curriculum into pieces and continually testing the pieces, students are controlled. Kohn states that "fragmentation produces an incoherent curriculum that is hard for even the 'good' students to really understand, much less to care about" (1999, p.69).

Curriculum is not a neutral body of facts. According to Giroux, it is "a way of organizing knowledge, values, and relationships of social power" (Wink, 1997, p.93). Wink maintains that there is a hidden curriculum that is "the unexpressed perpetuation of dominant culture through institutional processes....It teaches what is assumed to be important" (p.43). Wink also contends the traditional curriculum defines the standard for the dominant culture, thereby leaving out the marginalized population. She raises the critical questions of "Whose standard? Whose culture? Whose knowledge? Whose history? Whose language?

Whose perspective?" (p.43) should be used to influence curriculum development?

For most adults today, a standardized, imposed and very broad curriculum is all they have ever known. It has been taken for granted that curriculum is developed by experts and transmitted to students via a teacher or textbook. However, there is a different transformative perspective which includes the teacher and student in the curriculum development process and encourages deep levels of understanding. In this view of curriculum, the student becomes very much the center of what is learned and taught. There is extensive research that supports this perspective.

Doll (1993) envisions curriculum as a reflective experience where the students "are transformed by the process itself...Here curriculum's role is not to pre-set experiences but to transform the experiences had" (p.141). He reiterates that concept when he makes the point that curriculum should not be viewed as a "'course to be run,' but as a passage of personal transformation" (p.3 - 4).

Transformational curriculum is integrated, social, experiential, reflective, and dialogic. It is a process rather than a list of things to be learned or activities to be completed. It is viewed as a scaffold or framework that

"helps us approach the vast richness of the world in a coherent way" (Miller, 1993, p.13). There is a search for patterns and a strong sense of interconnectedness as "every subject in the curriculum is a way of organizing human experience and is therefore interconnected at a deep level" (Caine and Caine, 1997b, p.129).

The creation of a community of learners is another key component of transformational curriculum. In a genuine atmosphere of community, the search for truth can be explored and many expressions and ideas are valued. Doll writes that dialogue becomes the basis as "it is through dialogue within a caring and critical community that methods, procedures and values are developed from life experiences" (p.68). Routman, quoting a teacher practitioner, states that "curriculum is not a document; it's a dialogue" (1996, p.57).

Integration of subject matter areas across the curriculum is also an important component of a transformational curricular approach. As Alfred Whitehead wrote in 1916, "The solution which I am urging is to eradicate the fatal disconnection of subjects which kills the vitality of our modern curriculum. There is only one subject matter for education, and that is Life in all its

manifestations" (Moffett, 1994, p.149). Wagner agrees and states that the essential skills for the information age are the ability to use and make sense of information. The real goal should not be memorization of facts, but rather the "development of a breadth of understanding of central concepts and the ability to integrate and apply knowledge – within, as well as across, traditional disciplines" (1997, p.173).

A thematic, "less is more" curriculum for deep understanding is another primary component. Many educators (Wagner, 1997; Goodlad, 1994; Kohn, 1999; Gardner, 1993; Zemelman, Daniels and Hyde, 1993; Wink, 1997) express the importance of depth and choice in order to encourage genuine learner involvement and interest. Goodlad supports Ted Sizer's recommendation that curricula be "organized around key concepts and themes that are deepened over the years by coming at them through varied instructional procedures" (1994a, p.229). Also writing in favor of a recursive approach to curriculum, Doll recommends a return to Bruner's "spiral curriculum" theory and Gardner also supports the concept of spiraled curriculum "in which rich, generative ideas are revisited

time and again across a student's career in school" (p.192).

Another recognized transformative curricular approach is one based on inquiry (Kohn, 1999; Wink, 1997; Postman and Weingartner, 1969). Kohn suggests "the trick is to start not with facts to be taught or disciplines to be mastered, but with questions to be answered" (1999, p.145). As with other transformative practices, a curriculum based on inquiry puts the student at the center of the learning experience and acknowledges the principle that "truth suggests that the curriculum, no matter what subjects we teach, is sitting in front of us every day, in the living, breathing lives of our students" (Crowell, Caine and Caine, 1998, p.65).

Respecting and honoring the diversity and autonomy of learners is another characteristic of transformative curriculum. This includes the recognition of different learning styles and interests and also the multi-cultural nature of our student population. Due to this awareness, "we need a new curricular paradigm: one that does not ignore the disciplines of knowledge, but reveals their proper place in the general scheme of things as one part of a person's education..." (Martin, 1997, p.21).

In recent years there has been tremendous change in the demographics of the United States with continually increasing racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity. Armstrong contends "such diversity presents a great challenge for educators in designing curriculums that are not only content-sensitive to cultural differences...but also process-sensitive" (1994, p.161). Wink presents Giroux's reminder to educators that they "are not passive technocrats devoid of power over curriculum" (p.93) and she strongly states that if curriculum needs to be challenged, it is the responsibility of educators to do so.

Beane and Apple discuss a democratic curriculum that allows young people to become "critical readers" of their society (p.13) and also allows them to "shed the passive role of knowledge consumers and assume the active role of 'meaning makers'" (p.16). Within this context, the student is viewed as a constructor of knowledge, a concept explored in greater depth in the section on instruction.

The transformative vision of curriculum also addresses the significance of a mind/body/senses approach to curriculum. Many theorists (Eisner, 1985, 1994; Goodlad, 1994; Gardner, 1993; Crowell, Caine and Caine, 1998) stress the great importance of, and yet the relative absence of,

the arts in education today. Eisner specifically values the development of different forms of representation as they relate to literacy and meaning-making. He writes that "The arts are not a second-class substitute for expression, they are one of the major means people throughout history have used both to conceptualize and express what has been inexpressible in discursive terms" (1985, p.226). He states a concern about the limiting aspect of most curricula for "when we define the curriculum we are also defining the opportunities the young will have to experience different forms of consciousness" (1994, p.44). He adds that "when we look at school curricula with an eye toward the full range of intellectual processes that human beings can exercise, it quickly becomes apparent that only a slender range of those processes is emphasized" (1985, p.99).

The lack of quality arts education in most curricula has been an on-going concern for Eisner:

The idea that the arts deal with feeling and that reading and arithmetic deal with thinking is a part of the intellectual belief structure that separates cognition from affect, a structure whose consequences are as deleterious for educational theory as they are for psychology. (1985, p.92)

Goodlad also laments the lack of the arts in the schools and draws a correlation between arts education and the development of creativity when he states, "If one assumes that the arts and humanities offer unique avenues for creativity, then one is discouraged by their relative neglect" (1994b, p.55).

Transformative curriculum recognizes the qualitative aspects of learning — those things that are not usually measured or found on tests. Noddings suggests that curriculum should be organized "around themes of care rather than the traditional disciplines. All students should be engaged in a general education that guides them in caring for self, intimate others, global others, plants, animals and the environment..." (1997, p.35). She embraces the concept of curriculum that addresses the moral aspects of life as foundational to those aspects purely intellectual or academic.

An extension of this curricular perspective has the "community" as a concentration (Wink, 1997; Harwayne, 1999; Postman and Weingartner, 1969). In this orientation, there are no "subjects" in the traditional sense, rather a focus on the community, its problems and the exploration of possible solutions. There are student leadership

opportunities and the teacher functions primarily in an advisory role. This curricular practice invites students into "constructive, responsible participation in community affairs" (Postman and Weingartner, 1969, p.157). Students are not confined to classrooms, as "the whole city can – and should – be a continuous 'learning laboratory'" (p.157).

On a similar, if more global perspective, O'Sullivan proposes the importance of curriculum encompassing ecological concerns. His view of transformative education requires a planetary consciousness that rejects the corporate vision of an infinitely exploitable planet. He states that "a more positive programme for public education must be offered which fosters a sustainable education within a planetary vision" (1999, p.201). He calls for a curricular education that recognizes the vital importance of the bio-region as a focus of study and as a counter force to the movement toward globalization:

The air and water and soil and seeds that provide our basic sustenance, the sunshine that pours its energies over the landscape, these are integral with the functioning of the fruitful earth. Physically and spiritually we are woven into this living process. (p.202)

In summary, the traditional curriculum in place in most of our schools today is standardized and either

purchased or developed outside the instructional environment. It is sequential and viewed by many as fragmented and too broad to allow for the development of genuine meaning and understanding for many learners. It is also political in that it represents what the dominant culture believes to be important.

The researched curriculum models and visions discussed above represent a more meaningful and viable option for learners today. It is transformational in that it brings about a markedly different change in appearance or form. It changes the nature, function and condition of the learning experience. The foundations of this vision include a community of learners involved in reflection, dialogue, inquiry, seeking integration and interconnectedness, searching for deep meaning and understanding through personal construction of knowledge in a spiraling, recursive curricular environment. There is recognition, respect, and valuing of diversity – in both learning styles and cultural differences. A mind/body/senses orientation gives value to and opportunity for artistic expression and the development of different forms of representation. Within this transformational

curriculum there is inherent value and focus placed on caring for individuals, the community and our world.

Instruction

Instruction is the most visible component of the educational system and has traditionally been relegated to the classroom. In our current traditional system, instruction could be described as a method of transmitting knowledge. Instruction is defined by the curriculum and imparted by the teacher. Increasingly, it is driven by standardized assessment.

Many educational theorists describe the traditional system as the industrial or machine model. This model is highly criticized as a deterrent to genuine learning (Henderson and Hawthorne, 1995; Caine and Caine, 1997; Mayher, 1990; Berliner and Biddle, 1995). Caine and Caine express the opinion that educators have "perfected the mechanistic view of reality" (1997a, p.36). With the machine as metaphor, "all the parts, including teacher and child, tend to be seen as 'objects' that we do things to - whether it is an empty container to be filled with facts or a malfunctioning part that needs to be improved" (p.36). As mentioned in the discussion on curriculum, in this model, it is assumed that only experts create knowledge,

teachers deliver it and children are graded on how much they remember (Caine and Caine, 1997b, p.4).

Mayher also describes the metaphors often used to characterize the passive nature of learners and learning in a traditional instructional approach. He mentions among others "the learner as empty vessel to be filled with the content of education, the learner as maze runner who needs to master the basics...the learner as sponge who absorbs information and squeezes it back out when appropriate" (1990, p.50). Mayher describes what Caine and Caine (1997b) have termed the transmission model of instruction and learning, the one that is most prevalent in our schools today. Transmission, delivery, and machine metaphors, although somewhat distinct in emphasis, are used interchangeably to characterize a top-down system of instruction.

This traditional or transmission model of instruction is reviewed and challenged by Kohn (1999). He describes an instructional system that is centered on talking and telling rather than on the development of deep understanding. Textbooks, lecture, and the memorization of isolated facts and skills are the most common components and there is little respect for students as active

learners. According to Kohn, the transmission model is founded on the belief that if "you taught it, the kids should learn it." It does not require the serious investigation of instructional methodology or the need for the teacher to assume some responsibility for those who are failing to learn.

Laura Resnick, as quoted by Kohn, makes the point that in the transmission model there is the tendency for long years of drill on the basics before thinking and problem solving are introduced. She seriously questions this and states that "research suggests that failure to cultivate aspects of thinking [that are part of] higher order skills may be the source of major learning difficulties even in elementary school" (1999, p.52).

Leslie Hart, one of the earlier researchers on learning patterns of the brain and the implications for classroom instruction, maintained that in order for people to make full use of the enormous power of the brain, they needed to be free of threat. He defined the term *downshifting* as "any emotional biasing away from the fullest use of the neocortex and its resources toward more reliance on older, cruder portions of the whole brain system" (1975, p.126). The Caines describe downshifting

"as a psychophysiological response to perceived threat accompanied by a sense of helplessness and lack of self-efficacy" (1994, p.69).

When these definitions are applied to students as learners, and to teachers as instructors, they have tremendous implications. Caine and Caine maintain "an educational system that employs power and induces downshifting therefore prevents maximum learning. It restricts one's perspective, reflection, creative thinking, and ability to live with paradox and engage in most forms of high-order thinking" (1997b, p.97).

Caine, Caine and Crowell identify specific conditions they believe lead to the occurrence of downshifting in classrooms. They include pre-specified "correct" outcomes that are established outside of the learner, limited personal meaning, rewards and/or punishments externally controlled and immediate, restrictive timelines, and unfamiliar work with limited support (1994, pp.32 - 33).

Downshifting has a broader effect when applied to teachers and entire systems. Berliner and Biddle maintain that the use of management by fiat is one of the most harmful aspects of our current educational system. They make the point that when educators are forced to comply

with directives, use certain instructional methods, cover certain material in a defined period of time, and compete for limited resources, they become resentful (1995, p.337). There is the tendency to fall back on tried and true procedures rather than to explore new methodologies. "Over time their curricula and teaching efforts become more standardized and superficial" (p.196).

There are many theorists (Hart, 1975; Caine and Caine, 1994,1997; Moffett, 1994; Mayher, 1990; Marzano, 1992, Tanner, 1998) who lament that there is much knowledge concerning what should be happening in schools, although very little of it is being implemented on a consistent basis. Caine and Caine have a great deal to say on this topic and give a brief analysis of the current situation from their perspective:

We give teachers few resources and limit their disciplinary instruction to largely surface knowledge. We restrict teacher training to traditional teaching, rather than linking practice to how children actually learn, and we look almost exclusively to test scores as indicators of success. Given what we know about brain development, our approach is folly. (1997b, p.12)

Moffett asserts that "it is simply not true that educational change awaits new ideas or higher goals or more information. What we know to do far exceeds what we are

free to do" (1994, p.150). Tanner (1998) agrees with this assertion and states

In education, we have a vast and rich knowledge base on which to build... The capacity to build on and draw from the knowledge base requires that our theory be tested continually for its power for generalizability and practicability in a wide range of situations. (1998, p.349)

He adds that "if we do not build on that base, our research and school practices will shift unwittingly with whatever sociopolitical tide is dominant" (p.349).

As with the discussion on curriculum, the research on learning theory points to instructional approaches that can be described as transformational. Curriculum and instruction become closely intertwined components in a transformational approach and share many of the same characteristics. The focus in general shifts from the teacher to the student and from the information taught to the understanding gained. The teacher remains a very important and vital component to genuine learning, for as Eisner states, "in the last analysis, it is what teachers do in classrooms and what students experience that define the educational process" (1985, p.59). However, in transformational instruction, the role of the teacher and the learner change tremendously. Doll writes that in the new model of instruction, "these relations will exemplify

less the knowing teacher informing unknowing students, and more a group of individuals interacting together in the mutual exploration of relevant issues" (p.3).

The classroom and school as a community of learners is another recognized aspect of transformational instruction (Kohn, 1996, 1999; Caine, Caine and Crowell, 1994; Marzano, 1992; Wink, 1997; Doll, 1993; Hindley, 1996; Fogarty, 1999). An environment where learners feel valued and cared about, and learn to care about others, is an important component. Within this environment, the practice of class meetings is recognized by some as an effective and valuable tool for building community and learning to solve problems cooperatively (Kohn, 1996; Nelson, Lott & Glenn, 1993).

Doll's description of community has implications beyond the issues of camaraderie and friendship:

In this frame, John Dewey's sense of community is placed in a new light. More than being merely a pleasant frame in which to work or in keeping with our democratic beliefs, community — with its sense of both cooperation and critical judgement — may be essential to meaningful, deep learning. (pp.104 - 105)

Within this community of learners, exploratory "talk is intended to be one of the major processes through which learning occurs, not merely a way of reporting prior learning" (Mayher, p.241). Fogarty emphasizes the

influence of Vygotsky's theory which "suggests that we learn first through person-to-person interactions and then individually through an internalization process that leads to deep understanding" (1999, p.77).

Transformational instruction is democratic in that it respects the inherent differences in student learning styles, strengths, and weaknesses. Clifford and Friesen, as quoted by Caine and Caine, address this issue very succinctly when they state, "We feel that teachers also need to understand that it is only the big, authentically engaging questions that create openings wide and deep enough to admit all adventurers who wish to enter" (1997b, p.123).

Cultural responsiveness is another characteristic of transformational instruction. In our increasingly diverse school population, "culturally responsive instruction acknowledges and appreciates children's home cultures" (Neuman, 1999, p.260) and "acknowledges the importance of continuity between the child's experiences with literacy and home and those encountered in school" (p.261).

The student as the center of the learning process and as a meaning-maker is addressed as a central foundation of transformational instruction (Caine, Caine and Crowell,

1994; Kohn, 1994, 1999; Postman and Weingartner, 1969; Smith, 1997; Weaver, 1994; Marzano, 1994; Wink, 1997; Mayher, 1990). This approach places the student "at the center of the learning process as a meaning maker, not only as a meaning receiver" (Mayher, p.103). In this instructional environment, "students are actively generating knowledge rather than passively storing information for possible future use" (Wink, p.83).

There are several highly researched instructional theories and approaches that, although differing somewhat in terminology and orientation, share the definitive characteristics of transformational instruction as described above. Brain-based learning and instruction is one of these.

In an indictment written a quarter century ago, Leslie Hart bemoaned that "in the deepest most consequential sense educators in general do not know what they are doing, why they are doing it, or what they should be doing" (1975, p.10). This has changed. In the past decade there has been a tremendous amount of research and interest in the workings of the human brain and the implications of this research for classroom instruction. Sylwester calls for educators to explore the applications of brain theory and

research. As he states, "*Knowing why* generally leads to *knowing how to*" (1995, p.5, emphasis in original).

Brain-based learning (BBL) theory is complex and multi-faceted. It is founded on a set of beliefs and values. The learner is recognized as the one who interacts with information rather than absorbing it. The curriculum is intended to fit the learner instead of the learner fitting the curriculum. Brain-based theory is founded on the belief that the mind/body/senses operate as one dynamic unit and they influence and impact each other. Learning must address all three and educators need to find methods to address this complex reality.

BBL begins with the development of some basic understanding of the workings of the brain. Caine and Caine (1994, 1997) developed and modified twelve brain/mind principles which form the foundation of their instructional recommendations. The principles (see Appendix A) address many physiological factors that define the workings of the brain and therefore have implications for learning and instruction. Among these is the importance of teaching for patterning, connectedness and relationship (Wheatley, 1992; Caine and Caine, 1994, 1997; Caine, Caine and Crowell, 1994). Caine and Caine write that:

What we see here is that as people go deeper and deeper into an idea – any idea – there comes a point at which they see that everything is relationship. At that point, it becomes evident that any specific idea becomes a vehicle for exploring an infinite set of possible relationships in any number of fields. (1997b, p.128)

Recognition of the importance of teaching parts and wholes, orchestrating events outside the learner's consciousness, and deep understanding of the two different memory systems are also important principles related to a brain-based instructional approach.

According to the Caines (1994), the brain uses the taxon and locale memory systems to organize information. Taxon memory is used to memorize isolated, factual information. It is basic recall and results from practice and rehearsal in a rote learning situation. Items in the taxon memory are separate entities and transfer of knowledge is not always easy to accomplish. In contrast, the locale memory system is spacial and unlimited in its scope. Locale memory includes memories that exist in relation to other memories or events. It records life events, is open-ended and flexible, and is greatly enhanced by the senses. Locale memory develops maps and learning that expands and is augmented with each new related experience. While both memory systems are necessary in a

learning environment, a brain-based approach focuses on the locale system and map learning that helps students relate what they are learning to what they already know.

Another critical component of brain-based theory is the recognition of the vital importance of the emotions on learning (Caine and Caine, 1994, 1997; Jensen, 1998; Sylwester, 1995). There is a "critical interplay between how we feel, act, and think. There is no separation of mind and emotions; emotions, thinking and learning are all linked" (Jenson, p.71). Sylwester maintains that "emotion drives attention, which drives learning and memory" (p.86).

Similar to constructivist theory, brain-based theory seeks the construction of meaning for the learner. As Caine, Caine and Crowell state, "the important goal is to teach for the expansion of natural knowledge at every level of education in which understanding and meaningfulness are important" (1994, p.49). They define natural knowledge as "all the knowledge that is second nature to us. It is at the heart of pattern recognition..."(p.45) and "when the material that we deal with is sufficiently meaningful and is experienced in sufficiently complex ways, it becomes natural knowledge" (p.46).

A brain-based approach requires certain key elements in the instructional environment. They are described by the Caines (1994) as *orchestrated immersion, relaxed alertness, and active processing*.

Orchestrated immersion requires the creation of rich and complex experiences that allow the learner to perceive new patterns, relationships, and perceptions. It requires the engagement of the locale memory system and the goal is "to take information off the page and the chalkboard and bring it to life in the minds of students" (1994, p.115).

Relaxed alertness refers to a condition of low threat and high challenge. It is critical to an effective and positive learning environment (Hart; Jensen; Wink; Kohn, 1996, 1999; Hayes, Bahruth and Kessler, 1998; Routman). Students need to be challenged, but they also need to feel safe in order to take the risks that challenge requires because "kids (and adults) shut down when the task feels overwhelming" (Routman, p.108). When the level of challenge is appropriate, it leads to intrinsic motivation and self-propelled learning. As Kohn writes, "where interest appears, achievement usually follows" (1999, p.128). Relaxed alertness also creates an environment of personal "well-being and safety that allows students to

explore new thoughts and connections with an expanded capacity to tolerate ambiguity, uncertainty, and delay of gratification" (Caine and Caine, 1994, p.156).

The third key element in a brain-based instructional environment is active processing. This implies the on-going and continual reflection of the learner on the process of learning, the results experienced and the connections made. The Caines make the point that it:

is not just a stage in a lesson. It does not occur at one specific time, nor is it something that can be done in only one way. It is a matter of constantly 'working' and 'kneading' the ongoing experience that students have. (1994, p.157)

Mayher agrees and states that one of the most important aspects of learning is the development of metacognition or the "conscious reflection on what you've learned and, crucially, on how you've learned it...because the most significant learning that one can accomplish in schools is to learn how to learn" (p.96).

Another important transformative theoretical approach to instruction is that of constructivism, the seeds of which go back to John Dewey. Brooks and Brooks succinctly describe constructivism when they state that "learners control their learning. This simple truth lies at the heart of the constructivist approach to education" (1999,

p.21). It is a theory of learning that "describes the central role that learners' ever-transforming mental schemes play in their cognitive growth" (p.18) and insists that "the search for meaning takes a different route for each student" (p.21). Constructivist theory is strongly aligned to the importance of the locale memory system as discussed in BBL.

Constructivism is founded on the belief that learners are not blank slates waiting to be written upon (Kohn, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 1997) and that deep, meaningful learning cannot be forced on the learner by an outside authority. Rather, "knowledge is created anew by learners as they struggle to integrate what they are learning with everything else they know" (Berliner and Biddle, p.303). Henderson and Hawthorne contend that "when teachers allow students to create the 'known' through relevant inquiry activities, they are acknowledging and capitalizing on the way humans make meaning" (p.23). Kohn agrees and states that knowledge is constructed, not absorbed as "we form beliefs, build theories, and make order" (1999, p.132).

Five central tenets of a constructivist teacher as described by Brooks and Brooks include seeking and valuing students' point of view, structuring lessons that challenge

student suppositions, recognizing that the curriculum must have relevance for students, structuring lessons around big ideas, and assessing student learning within the context of classroom activities (p.21). While Fogarty (1999) notes the vital influence of six important educational theorists on the development of constructivist thinking. In addition to Dewey, these include Piaget, Vygotsky, Feuerstein, Gardner, and Diamond. Integrating their influence, she describes the essential elements of a constructivist environment that incorporates certain important components. These include a learner and life-centered curriculum, enriched environments, interactive settings, differentiated instruction, inquiry, experimentation and investigation, mediation and facilitation, and metacognitive reflection (p.78). Many of these elements correlate very closely with BBL theory and recommendations.

Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences theory is another highly regarded and researched approach to learning and instruction. Gardner has conceptualized the multidimensional nature of intelligence and identified eight specific areas of human intelligence: verbal, logical, spatial, musical, kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal and naturalist (Fogarty, p.77). The reality

of this multidimensional aspect of human beings naturally advocates for a broader perspective on educational opportunity, instruction, and learning. According to Fogarty, Gardner's theory reinforces the understanding that there are "many ways of knowing about the world and making personal meaning, but also in recognizing that there are many ways of expressing what students know and are able to do" (p.77).

The traditional school predominating today with uniform curriculum, instruction and assessment is the antithesis of Gardner's theory and research. Gardner envisions individual-centered schools based on two basic propositions. The first is that not all people have the same interests and abilities, or learn in the same way. The second is that in the information age in which we live, no one can learn everything there is to know, and therefore, it is necessary to make choices (Gardner, 1993, pp.10, 71-72). According to Gardner, the purpose of school should be to develop the various intelligences that people possess. Recognizing that these vary greatly:

Education ought to be so sculpted that it remains responsive to these differences. Instead of ignoring them, and pretending that all individuals have (or ought to have) the same kinds of minds, we should instead try to ensure

that everyone receive an education that maximizes his or her own intellectual potential. (p.71)

Therefore, it is the responsibility of schools to offer individual-centered learning opportunities that address the different intelligences in order for students to reach their own personal vocational and avocational potentials (p.9).

Gardner states that the goal of education is the development of understanding. In addition to recognizing and respecting the different intelligences that students possess, they must be allowed to demonstrate their learning through performance within the context of the learning environment and in ways appropriate to their individual ways of understanding and of demonstrating their understanding.

Educational theorist, Robert Marzano contends that:

We have not examined the learning process and then built instructional systems, administrative systems, indeed, entire educational systems that support what we know about the learning process. We have not built education from the bottom up, so to speak. (1992, p.1)

Taking the tremendous amount of research that has been done in the area of learning theory over the past thirty years, Marzano has developed the Dimensions of Learning, an integrated and complex model of instruction. There are

five dimensions that, while interdependent, also function in a somewhat sequential manner. They support and build on one another.

The Dimensions include (1) positive attitudes and perceptions about learning, (2) thinking involved in acquiring and integrating knowledge, (3) thinking involved in extending and refining knowledge, (4) thinking involved in using knowledge meaningfully, and (5) productive habits of mind (Marzano, 1992, p.vii). Reflecting the various important components of cognitive learning theory, the Dimensions form a cohesive guideline and method for perceiving these complex ideas.

Marzano also addresses instructional tasks and the importance of their relevance to student goals and meaningful use of knowledge. He recommends that instructional tasks center around decision making, experimental inquiry, invention, problem-solving and investigation, and believes that in order to be meaningful, they should be application oriented, and/or long-term, and/or student-directed.

In summary, traditional instructional orientations transmit knowledge. The curriculum is developed outside and separate from instruction and is transmitted to

students by the teacher or textbook. The teacher is the director of instruction, but has little control over the content taught. The learner has a passive role in this process and is often in a downshifted mode due to lack of interest or understanding. Instruction is highly influenced by standardized assessment.

By contrast, research on human learning suggests that the learner should be at the center of a learning process that involves making connections, constructing new knowledge and creating individual meaning. There is a recognition of, and respect for, the multidimensional aspect of learners and the importance of the emotional and affective aspects of learning. Instruction occurs within enriched environments and encourages complex instructional tasks involving inquiry, investigation and experimentation. There is reflective practice within a community of learners and assessment is conducted within the context of instruction.

Collectively, the research on learning emphasizes a transformation in both meaning and understanding. Transformational approaches go beyond content absorption to include conceptual understanding, applications to the real

world, and perceptual change in our relationship to what we know.

Assessment

The third component of the educational program is assessment. It is the means used to measure student learning. Historically, in the traditional model of school, assessment of individual student learning has been a combination of teacher made tests and tests tied to textbooks or curriculum programs. Typically, a yearly standardized test was also given at specific grade levels to look at trends and growth for a school, district or state. However, in the past ten to fifteen years, standardized achievement testing has become the major component in the assessment of learning. It is often instituted at all grade levels and the results are viewed by many as the primary indicator of individual student success and the effectiveness of teachers, schools, districts, and states.

In conjunction with the movement toward increased standardized assessment of learning, there has been a growing trend toward the establishment of student learning content and performance standards at the state level. These standards are sometimes referred to as "voluntary,"

but in fact, there is a great deal of pressure on districts to adopt and implement state standards.

Some view standards as a means of "raising the bar" and ensuring that all students "know and are able to do" the same information and skills that are deemed important to succeed in life. Some educators see standards as an impetus and a needed guideline for instruction. However, the establishment of standards immediately opens up some critical questions. There are many theorists who seriously challenge the concept of uniform standards for all students, and there are many reasons for their skepticism (Eisner; Wink; Brooks & Brooks; Gardner; Ohanian; Kohn; Moffett; Mayher).

Kohn quotes Darling-Hammond, a researcher who has investigated the impact of the standards movement and states that:

Many existing standards documents do not encourage teaching for understanding... They outline hundreds of bits of information for students to acquire at various grade levels in each subject area, creating expectations for content coverage that render impossible the in-depth study students need to understand and apply ideas. (1999, p.59)

In emphasizing the problem that results from the establishment of huge numbers of standards in many different subject areas, Kohn also quotes Whitehead, who

said that schooling then begins to suffer from "the fatal disconnection of subjects" (p.68).

Another critical issue related to the standards movement is that of justice and equity. Many believe it is not reasonable to expect all students to perform to the same level and within the same limited time frame during their educational journey. Ohanian states that "the standards are not about curriculum; the standards are about social justice" (p.113), and Kohn reinforces this opinion and states that the standards are "devices to privilege some over others. This movement is not only more about demanding than supporting; it is more about sorting than teaching" (1999, p.102).

Eisner agrees with this assessment and states that "implicit in having standards is the expectation that not everyone will meet them: standards provide one way to differentiate among students" (1985, p.4). In a biting comment about the application of uniform standards for all learners, Ohanian states that she has to "wonder what kind of mind can write that if one has commitment and a plan of action, all students will read and write at grade level" (p. 82). Wink asks the critical question, "Whose standard?" (p.43).

Brooks and Brooks maintain that state departments of education have the standards movement backwards. They should be setting standards for professional practice and the enhancement of student learning. Instead, they "have placed even greater weight on the same managerial equation that has failed repeatedly in the past: State Standards = State Tests; State Test Results = Student Achievement; Student Achievement = Rewards and Punishments" (p.19).

Standards are uniform learning goals. Whether they are seen as beneficial or harmful, they are presently a focus in most of our school systems. In theory, the method for assessment of learning is aligned with the standards. However, this is not always the case. As mentioned earlier, the most prevalent method of assessing student learning in the schools today is through standardized achievement tests. However, these tests do not necessarily align with the learning standards in a particular state or school district. According to Popham there are five such tests in use today: California Achievement Tests, Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills, Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, Metropolitan Achievement Tests, and Stanford Achievement Tests (1999, p.9).

Standardized achievement testing as implemented today has become a very controversial and questioned practice. The strongest opposition to the way they are presently used is founded in the tenets that they are reducing what schools teach by narrowing and controlling curriculum, limiting instructional innovation, and inhibiting genuine, meaningful learning for students (Eisner; Mayher; Brooks and Brooks; Berliner and Biddle; Haney and Madaus, 1989; Cunningham, 1999; Goodlad; Marzano; Armstrong, 1994; Routman; Miller, 1995; Moffett; Kohn; Gardner; Wiggins, 1989; International Reading Association, 1999).

Eisner concludes that he does "not believe it an exaggeration to say that test scores function as one of the most powerful controls on the character of educational practice" (1985, p.4). He maintains that teachers, although often having deep reservations, "give in" to the pressure of teaching to the test because of public expectations and their own personal fear and insecurity.

He states that:

Because test performance is used as an index of educational quality, being able to do well on tests becomes a critical concern for students and teachers alike. As this concern grows, educational programs become increasingly focused on those content areas and forms of teaching that are related to test performance. (pp.360 - 361)

Eisner asserts that teachers, like everyone else, adapt to the environment in which they are functioning. For many this "adaptation has resulted in the development of routine repertoires and stock responses that they have learned to use to cope with the demands made on them" (p.376).

This last statement is corroborated by a recent survey reported by The International Reading Association (IRA). In a position statement on high stakes testing in reading, the IRA reports that in one state, "75% of the classroom teachers surveyed thought the state assessment had a negative impact on their teaching" (1999, p.259). Because the stakes are so high, the pressure to perform is tremendous for both teachers and administrators. As Mayher points out, "The test scores are frequently published in newspapers and used to make comparisons, much in the way that batting averages are used to compare baseball players" (p.255). Kohn adds that:

The more a test is made to 'count' -- in terms of being the basis for promoting or retaining students, for funding or closing down schools -- the more that anxiety is likely to rise and the *less valid the scores become*. (1999, p.76, emphasis in text)

Standardized tests are also greatly effecting the curriculum that is offered in our schools. Eisner suggests that, because there is the wide spread belief that

something must be measurable in order to be evaluated, those things that are difficult to measure are left out or devalued. Therefore, "for the curriculum of the schools this means that evaluation practices, determined largely with respect to what can be measured, influence to a very large degree the kinds of programs that will be offered to the young" (1985, pp.14 - 15). Berliner and Biddle agree and add that "if such tests feature no expository writing, expository writing drops out of our schools; and if those tests do not or cannot assess scientific reasoning, then such reasoning will not be taught in science classes" (p. 318).

According to Miller, the genuine student learning that needs to be happening in our schools is greatly inhibited by this movement toward mass testing. He states

When the entire educational process is geared to standardized tests, the complexity, subtlety, and variety of meaningful learning is reduced to mere bits of data. This reductionism may serve the interests of politicians and administrators, but it does not help students learn. (p.15)

Linda McNeil, as quoted by Kohn, agrees and makes the very powerful observation that "measurable outcomes may be the least significant results of learning" (1999, p.75).

Brooks and Brooks as strong advocates of constructivist theory, also decry this testing movement as

harmful and inhibiting to genuine learning. According to them, "requiring all students to take the same courses and pass the same tests may hold political capital for legislators and state-level educational policymakers, but it contravenes what years of painstaking research tells us about student learning" (p.20). Kohn subscribes to the same opinion and states that "if we allow our legislators and school boards to make schools 'accountable' for producing higher standardized test scores, you can bet our children will receive an education completely out of step with the best thinking about how people learn" (1999, pp. 140 - 141).

Another criticism of standardized testing is that these tests do not measure many of the indicators of learning that educators consider to be the most important. One educator, as quoted in Kohn, listed some of these indicators and intangibles as "initiative, creativity, imagination, conceptual thinking, curiosity, effort, irony, judgment, commitment, nuance, good will, ethical reflection, or a host of other valuable dispositions and attributes" (1999, pp.82 - 83). Goodlad makes the point that there is a poor correlation between the traits that society wants in the workforce such as "good work habits,

company loyalty, dependability, honesty, teamwork, and the like" (1994a, p.201) and the items measured on standardized tests. Instead, these tests seem to "frequently reinforce -- unwittingly -- the lesson that mere right answers, put forth by going through the motions, are adequate signs of ability" (Wiggins, 1989, p.706).

In addition to narrowing and controlling curriculum, limiting instructional innovation and inhibiting genuine learning, there are other negative results from standardized testing. Many theorists see them as discriminatory toward ethnic minorities and lower socioeconomic groups and as a means of ranking and sorting students, thereby creating an environment of winners and losers within the schools (T. Meier, 1995; Hayes, Bahruth and Kessler, 1998; Haney and Madaus; Teeter, 1997; Routman; Farenga, 1995; Mayher; Popham).

Hayes, Bahruth and Kessler make the point that "failure to account for language and cultural variations in student populations continues to be a widespread problem in assessment" (1998, p.132). T. Meier strongly sums up his position when he states "the fundamental question is, What is wrong with a society that allocates its educational resources on the basis of tests that not only fail to

measure excellence but also discriminate against the vast majority of its minority population?" (1995, p.184).

Popham maintains that students' socioeconomic status is highly correlated to standardized test scores because "many items on standardized achievement tests really focus on assessing knowledge and/or skills learned outside of school - knowledge and/or skills more likely to be learned in some socioeconomic settings than others" (1999, p.14).

Another issue related to testing is that fear and stress sometimes result in cheating. Farenga maintains "as long as testing is used to create winners and losers for the meritocracy of school, there will be fear of tests among students" (1995, p.219). When tests are used to hold students, teachers and schools accountable, the pressure to perform increases. Moffet suggests that "tying test scores directly to money makes accountability boomerang by inviting rather than deterring corruption. Many students and teachers are tempted to cheat when tests are too closely linked to career opportunities or to holding a job" (1994, p.112).

Some theorists question the actual validity of the tests. Mayher states that "*they just don't test what they purport to test*. That is, in the area of language

education, the reading tests *don't* validly test reading ability, the writing tests *don't* validly test writing ability, and so on" (p.255, emphasis in text).

In addition to questioning the overall validity of the tests as a measurement of learning, there is also a great deal of criticism as to how the test results are used.

Haney and Madaus lament that standardized testing is

becoming so pervasive in the schools and the same tests are being used for so many different purposes -- from diagnoses of student learning to program evaluation, from teacher evaluation to systemwide accountability -- that both test results and curriculum and instruction are becoming warped, if not corrupted. (1989, p.687)

Popham raises several important issues concerning standardized testing that are rarely addressed. He makes the point that standardized achievement tests are a very effective means of comparing student performance with certain skills and knowledge on a national level. However, he strongly contends that they should not be used to evaluate educational quality and he gives three powerful rationales for this assertion.

The first point he makes is that standardized tests are inherently very general in their content in order to appeal to a large general market and audience. As a result, there is bound to be a good deal of mismatch

between what is taught in any one school or district and what is tested (p.12).

A second factor affecting standardized test results is the fact that they contain a very small number of items that are purposefully developed to make comparisons between students. Only about half of the students are intended to answer each test item correctly, therefore creating the desired "spread." Items are "tossed out" if too many students answer them correctly, and in reality, if teachers have taught certain information well, these are the items that are likely to be eliminated. In other words, it is students' natural ability or intelligence that is being tested rather than how well they have been taught (p.13). And as Eisner points out "virtually all achievement tests given to students in elementary and secondary schools ...assess verbal or mathematical performance....students whose aptitudes lie outside of these realms...never enter the equation for calculating intellectual ability" (1985, pp.374 - 375).

The third factor that Popham discusses is the one he considers the most important. Student performance on standardized achievement tests is greatly impacted by out of school learning. This important factor was referenced

earlier by those theorists who see these tests as discriminatory. As Popham states, "if children come from advantaged families and stimulus-rich environments, then they are more apt to succeed on items in standardized achievement test items than will other children whose environments don't mesh as well with what the tests measure" (p.13).

To summarize Popham's points, he maintains that three factors contribute to students' test scores on standardized achievement tests: what's taught in school, students' native intellectual ability, and students' out of school learning. As he emphasizes, only one of these three factors is "directly linked to educational quality" (p. 15). Thus, based on Popham's analysis, holding schools solely responsible for performance on these tests is inherently unfair and invalid.

A final criticism of standardized testing is the tremendous amount of time and money that is delegated to implementation. Berliner and Biddle cite figures from the National Commission on Testing and Public Policy, which found that mandatory testing in America "consumes annually some 20 million school days and the equivalent of \$700 and \$900 million in direct and indirect expenditures" (p.197).

In contrast to the standardized assessment of learning that is currently predominating in our schools, there is a quest by many theorists for the institution of more authentic, meaningful and equitable evaluation of learning in schools (Eisner; Henderson and Hawthorne; Doll; Caine and Caine; Mayher; Wiggins; Armstrong; Gardner; Kohn; Zemelman, Daniels and Hyde; Moffett; Weaver; Goodlad). For the sake of consistency, these researched approaches can be generally referred to as transformative methods of evaluation. Henderson and Hawthorne summarize the need for this transformative approach when they write

What is needed is an approach to evaluation of student learning that attends to what is important, assesses it in a comprehensive and authentic manner, and provides the information to students, parents, community members, educators, and policy makers in a usable and meaningful form. (p. 72)

One of the first characteristics of a transformative approach to evaluation of learning is that it is an asset or potentials approach rather than a deficit approach. In other words, according to Doll "the primary emphasis in any competence model is not on the deficits of Being but on the powers of Becoming" (p.49). Mayher agrees and writes that in an asset model, errors are viewed "as evidence of learning, the challenge being to determine what has been

learned in order to help the child go on to new and more appropriate learning" (p.88).

Another basic premise of transformative evaluation is that it is accomplished in a variety of ways. Armstrong maintains that just as Multiple Intelligences theory holds that there are eight different intelligences and eight different ways to teach an objective, it also implies that any subject can be assessed in at least eight different ways (p.121). In other words, there are multiple ways of knowing and also multiple ways of showing.

In addition, transformative evaluation is on-going and integrated into the instructional program. According to Gardner, "rather than being imposed 'externally' at odd times during the year, assessment ought to become part of the natural learning environment" (p.174). Kohn quotes the first principle that came out of the 1995 National Forum on Assessment which states that "the primary purpose of assessment is to improve student learning" (1999, p.191). Jerome Bruner, as also quoted in Kohn, makes the statement that the creation of learning environments where students can "experience success and failure not as reward and punishment, but as information" (p.191) is critical to genuine learning.

Synonymous with transformative evaluation are the terms authentic and/or performance assessment. Wiggins states that "we have lost sight of the fact that a true test of intellectual ability requires *the performance of exemplary tasks*" (1989, p.703, emphasis in text). He elaborates further on the idea of performance tasks where:

thoughtful understanding implies being able to do something effective, transformative, or novel with a problem or complex situation. An authentic test enables us to watch a learner pose, tackle, and solve slightly ambiguous problems. It allows us to watch a student marshal evidence, arrange arguments, and take purposeful action to address the problems.
(p.705)

According to Wiggins, among the criteria for authentic forms of testing are a public audience, realistic and flexible time frames, collaboration with others, opportunities for students to extend and expand their knowledge, involvement in complex intellectual challenge, use of multi-faceted scoring systems, and minimal comparisons of learners (pp.711 - 712). Lastly, Wiggins emphasizes that "legitimate assessments are responsive to individual students and to school contexts. Evaluation is most accurate and equitable when it entails human judgment and dialogue" (p.704).

Goodlad addresses one other aspect of school evaluation that is rarely discussed or seriously looked at as a factor in student learning. He refers to this as the "qualitative appraisals of what goes on in schools" (1994b, p.59). He believes some pointed and thought-provoking questions need to be asked. He mentions issues such as how students spend their time in school, how they feel about what they are doing, how many students are absent from school each day other than for illness, and how many students will not stay home when they are sick because they do not want to miss school (p.61). He believes these are some of the issues that need to be seriously investigated when attempting to evaluate school programs. With a tone of sarcasm, he quotes a school administrator who referred to his school as more successful than it used to be "because the kids don't throw up as often" (p.61).

In summary, assessment of learning and school success, as currently implemented, primarily involves standardized achievement tests that are statistically normed to maintain a bell shaped curve. They are timed, multiple-choice tests that have one correct answer and allow no opportunity for questions or dialogue. Increasingly, they have become the indicators of school, teacher and individual student

success, therefore greatly influencing curriculum and methods of instruction. Because they are limited in the scope of what they can measure, they are limiting what is being taught and valued in our schools. There is a noted imbalance of performance on standardized tests for minority and low socioeconomic groups and some challenge that they accurately test what they propose to test. Regardless, standardized achievement tests, along with pre-established standards of content and performance, are powerful influences on schools today.

In contrast, transformative assessment provides opportunities for students to demonstrate their understanding through the performance of authentic tasks within the instructional framework. It is individualized and personally meaningful to the learner. It is directly tied to and integrated with the learning that is occurring in the classroom. It is accomplished in an atmosphere of collegial support and involves dialogue, questioning, and collaboration. It evaluates personal growth rather than comparing students to each other and includes the important component of self-evaluation. Transformative assessment is integrated within the framework of transformative curriculum and instruction and, according to many of the

theorists, together they form a unified organism that flows from one into the other.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure is defined in the dictionary as an underlying base or foundation, especially for an organization or system. There is an infrastructure in the educational system that supports and reinforces the perpetuation of the system. In order to get a total picture of the system, it is important to understand the current infrastructure and also the potential alternatives that could offer change.

As has been referenced previously in this paper, the current infrastructure of our school system has been increasingly influenced by big business and controlled by the government. Driven by the direction established by the federal government, the state legislatures, state school boards, and departments of education have been developing policies that directly impact the operation of our schools, often almost totally usurping local control. Critics (Miller; Moffett; Kane, 1995; Purpel; Porter, 1995; Rockmuller and Houk, 1995; Kohn; Goodlad; Ohanian) state strong opposition to this phenomenon. Miller quotes George H. Wood, from his book *Schools that Work* (1992), where he

states that "We are witnessing a 'legislated excellence' movement throughout America that, while perhaps well-intentioned, will make excellence in education even more difficult to attain" (p.12).

This legislative excellence movement is directly tied to the national standards movement of the early 1990s. Purpel laments that "the harsh reality is that there is now official sanction and anointment for a particular curriculum perspective, a reality made poignant if not tragic given that this perspective is culturally narrow and intellectually shallow" (p. 157). Miller refers to this movement as an attempt to "establish a monocultural vision of American society and act powerfully to close off the possibility of a truly multicultural democracy" (p.17).

Kenneth Goodman, as quoted by Miller, is vehement about the national goals agenda:

I accuse the politicians and technicians of the standards movement of using standards as a cover for a well-orchestrated attempt to centralize power and thus control who will teach, who will learn, what will be taught in the nation's schools, and who will determine the curriculum for schools and for teacher education. (p.18)

He further accuses the politicians of failing to spend the money required to meet the real needs of education.

Kane concurs and maintains that the real problems of our educational system are not addressed by the national goals movement. He mentions the factors of poverty, lack of educational resources, poor accountability systems, bureaucratic structures, and curriculum and instruction unresponsive to the needs and interests of children (1995, p.61). Instead of addressing these needs, "the imperative was to set high arbitrary standards with the demand that they be achieved" (p.61). He suggests that this perspective defines children as human capital, and that:

The rhetoric of reform has assumed that schools serve political and economic functions but has failed to recognize that schools are cultural institutions to the extent that they serve children as whole human beings learning to understand themselves, the world, and their place therein. (p.73)

Goodlad's greatest concern is the short-sightedness of this political agenda. The continual search for the "quick fix" to educational problems prevents looking "deeply into the conditions characterizing schools that appear to be working" (1994a, p.204). He further maintains that "the picture beginning to emerge regarding the nature of good schools is at odds with the standard of excellence that has been vigorously promoted within the policy framework of reform" (p.205).

Another serious criticism of government control of education concerns the issue of basic civil rights. During the current reform movement, there has not been a great deal of open debate on this issue. However, many theorists have strong opinions (Goodlad; Moffett; Kane; Porter; Rockmuller and Houk, 1995; Kohn).

Paraphrasing Dewey, Goodlad makes the point that "the state does not set the aims of education, nor do its educational pronouncements have any immunity from critical examination through the educational process" (1994b, p.36). Kane states that the "language of reform has extended the authority of government over the minds of individuals while simultaneously reducing the concept of human beings with 'unalienable rights'" (p.73). Moffett also sees it as a civil rights issue and states that "*citizens have no obligation to demonstrate their competence to the institution of the state*" (1995, p.47, emphasis in text).

Porter calls for the separation of school and state, much like the historical separation of church and state and maintains that "families should be free of government compulsion in the education of their children" (1995, p.184). When discussing the concept of national goals, Rockmuller and Houk make the point that "the issue is not

whether these are admirable goals or loathsome ones; rather the issue is who chooses for a particular family what the goals for its children should be" (1995, p.203).

Kohn addresses another controversial issue -- that of state control over instructional methodology. He states that in "1996 and 1997, state legislators across the country introduced sixty-seven phonics bills. To date, at least ten states have enacted such laws" (1999, pp.8 - 9).

These theorists suggest that there is need for government support of education. Their argument is with the current extent of that involvement and control. According to Kane, the role of government should be limited to the "complex questions relating to the financing of education, the enforcement of civil rights, and the safety and well-being of children" (p.74).

Moffett asserts that the government has based its reform agenda on two erroneous assumptions. "One is that assessment is the instrument of change, because schools teach to tests. The second is that business knows best, because public education is really just another business" (1994, p.118). The first assumption has some truth to it because it has been widely affirmed that schools and teachers do tend to teach to tests and therefore, large

scale standardized assessment as seen today, has become an instrument of change. The debatable question becomes what kind of change has it engendered? The second assumption, that of education as just another business, leads into the current impact of business and corporate thinking on education. Many theorists believe that this impact has been historical, pervasive, and negative (Miller; Berlak, 1995; Moffett; Doll; Martin, 1997; Darling-Hammond; Eisner, 1985).

Using their influence and direction, many corporate leaders have been spokespersons on education and the need for reform. In 1994, Louis Gerstner, CEO of IBM, speaking in support of Goals 2000 legislation, stated

We must establish clear goals and measure progress to them. We must articulate exactly what we expect from schools, teachers, principals, students and parents, and we must provide rewards and incentives to reach them...If the goals are not met, we need to exact stiff penalties, changing the leadership and even dismissing staff members in schools that aren't performing...All this will require revamping licensing requirements, [and the] testing and assessment of both students and staff. (Berlak, 1995, pp.139 - 140)

His suggestions forewarned the future as many states have incorporated these ideas into practice.

Another highly quoted corporate spokesman who has influenced educational policy is Lee Iacocca, chairman of

Chrysler Corporation. In 1991 he addressed the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, a highly respected organization for educational leadership, at their annual convention and said, "Your product needs a lot of work, and in the end, it's your job...Your customers don't want to hear about your raw materials problem -- they care about results." (Moffett, 1994, p.140). Moffett is highly critical of this analogy:

Comparing children to metal, rubber, and plastic is hard to forgive...What possible sense can this analogy between school and business make when the raw materials, the products, and the consumers are all one and the same -- the citizens? (p 141)

The factory model of schools and learners has been discussed throughout this paper. There is a historical perspective to this model. Doll points out that U.S. Steel, when establishing the model town of Gary, Indiana at the turn of the century, was instrumental in establishing the segmentation of the school day into specific time slots that fit the efficiency model of steel production. "Thus, U.S. Steel Company gave mechanized clocks to every classroom" (p.43) and this tradition has held on to this day.

Business or factory metaphors for schools and students abound in the criticism of our current system. One is

school as "a special kind of production site -- a factory that turns out workers for the nation's public and private sectors" (Martin, p.18). Another has students as "raw materials to be 'processed' by schools according to specifications defined by schedules, programs, courses, and exit tests" (Darling-Hammond, p.45).

Goodman, as quoted by Miller, observes that our standardized education today is a direct result of the "mass production mentality of the past century" (p.21) and states that "in the industrial view, schools are factories taking children as raw materials, shaping them through controlled, uniform treatments, and delivering them as standard products" (p.21). Moffett agrees with this assessment and states that "much of the awful stuff that goes on in schools can be traced to this inappropriate analogy between learning processes and the procedures by which inert physical materials are manufactured and sold" (1994, p.92).

Eisner sums up the problem with these metaphors when he states, *"the dominant image of schooling in America has been the factory and the dominant image of teaching and learning the assembly line. These images underestimate the complexities of teaching and neglect the differences*

between education and training" (1985, pp.355 - 356, emphasis in text).

Another factor influencing our public schools is the tremendous size of the infrastructure. As organizations grow in size, their complexity tends to increase and a great deal of energy goes into self-maintenance. Goodlad makes the point that "our educational system is held together by structural arrangements of such proportions that its maintenance consumes a large portion of the total resources allocated to it" (1994b, p.64). In addition to requiring huge outlays of resources, the schools are becoming so large they are losing a sense of intimacy that is so important to students.

Within this huge, factory modeled infrastructure, there is much concern among educational theorists about the meaninglessness of school for many of today's teachers and students. Darling-Hammond reflects on the consequences of policies that make no sense to those who have to enforce them. She describes

A world in which educators cease to try to make sense of their environment for themselves as professionals or for their students. They have to explain to students the procedures and policies that students encounter only in terms of what some faceless, external, and presumably nonrational 'they' say we have to do. (p.44)

She goes on to discuss the alienation that results for both students and teachers when nothing makes sense in the school environment and promotes the position that "solving the problem of contradictory policies is a prerequisite for solving the problems of student engagement and learning in schools" (p.45).

Kohn describes the current system as one filled with the teacher doing the "chalk'n talk, stand and deliver, sage on the stage" (1999, p.61) delivery of information and the students receiving by the "sit'n git" (p.61) method. He quotes George Wood, who maintains that the current reforms in our system are the most "anti-student list we could imagine. More tests, more homework, more drill, more hours, more days. It's as if we are to just do more of what isn't working now" (p.103).

Zemelman, Daniels and Hyde agree. They make the point that there has been very little serious, broad based questioning of the day to day workings and operation of the American education system. Instead, within the current reform movement, there has been the assumption "that if the same activities are conducted within an enhanced framework - with more time, more money, more teachers, more tests, - then student achievement and outcomes will improve" (p.3).

All we have to do is the same things "harder, longer and stronger" (p.3). They maintain that we are learning that this does not work because what we have been doing in schools has not been working in the first place. Specifically, "we don't empower kids, we don't nurture literacy, don't produce efficient workers, don't raise responsible citizens, we don't create a functional democracy" (p.3). Since more of the same is not working, they call for a different approach to student achievement, one that will "act directly upon teaching and learning" (p.3).

Postman and Weingartner also address student alienation from the schools, especially for disadvantaged students. They maintain "the conventional school is a hostile place, especially to urban 'disadvantaged' children. They do not learn what the school says it 'teaches,' and they drop out - or are thrown out- of it as soon as they reach an age where this is legally possible" (pp.155 - 156). They make the point that these alienated students do not go away. They become a part of the larger society and often a negative part. Society winds up paying a very high price for failing to ensure that school is a meaningful and valuable experience that gives these

students a sense of worth and a belief in a positive future.

Gardner agrees and maintains that the significance that schooling held for the majority of students in the past is no longer true for many students in our schools today. Many students feel distanced from the relevance of the school experience and have little faith in its meaningfulness for their future lives. He asserts that "much if not most of what happens in schools happens because that is the way it was done in earlier generations, not because we have a convincing rationale for maintaining it today" (p.199) and he believes that students find more relevance "in the media, in the marketplace, and all too frequently in the demimonde of drugs, violence and crime" (p.199).

Caine and Caine declare that the current state of unrest in the educational system is a direct result of the larger foundational changes and challenges in our society. They maintain that for many years education:

has been stable, dwelling quite comfortably in an ordered state. However, over the past several years, there has been more and more interaction with the environment — more intensive media coverage, more concern from political and religious groups, more demands from business, more special needs to accommodate, and more impact from technology. All of these have

perturbed the system. Thus, it is moving out of stability and into disequilibrium. (1997a, p.59)

According to Wheatley and new science theory, "if organizations are machines, control makes sense. If organizations are process structures, then seeking to impose control through permanent structure is suicide" (1992, p.23). Wheatley also emphasizes that when a system comes under great stress and is confronted with change, it will fall apart, but it will fall apart so it can reorganize itself (p.2). Some theorists believe this is what is happening with the educational system today. Doll likens it to "Kuhn's crisis stage of paradigm change" (p.128).

These theorists describe a huge, over-burdened, educational infrastructure of factory modeled schools with antiquated curricular and instructional approaches and alienated students and teachers, working within a politically driven bureaucracy. The researched transformational approaches to curriculum, instruction, and assessment that have been discussed previously do not fit into this educational infrastructure. If these approaches are to be explored in any meaningful depth, the infrastructure will need to change also. As Mayher states, "schools must be dramatically changed if they are to

fulfill their educational mission in a democratic society" (p.1).

Zemelman, Daniels and Hyde make some very powerful and convincing statements about the uniformity of opinion concerning the common "features that begin to define a coherent paradigm of learning and teaching across the whole curriculum" (1993, p.4). They maintain there is "unrecognized consensus" (p.6) among the recommendations coming out of very different educational leadership organizations in regards to a "consistent, harmonious, vision of best educational practice" (p.6). They state that:

This coherent philosophy and spirit is reaching across the curriculum and up through the grades. Whether it is called Whole Language, or integrated learning, or transdisciplinary studies, by some other name, or by no name at all, this movement is broad and deep and enduring. It is strongly backed by educational research, draws on sound learning theory, and has, under other names, been tested and refined over many years. (p.7)

If this is in fact the case, how is the new paradigm established? How is a new infrastructure built? How are environments created that support transformational education? How are truly democratic schools established within truly democratic communities of learners? There

seem to be no simple answers to these questions, but there is some consensus on direction.

Genuine dialogue within self-governing learning communities is viewed by many as a means of developing the capacity for school transformation (Darling-Hammond; D.Meier, 1997; Gardner; Goodlad; Ohanian; Keene and Zimmermann, 1997; Eisner). Inherent in the concept of deep and genuine dialogue is the concept of truly democratic schools that provide equal learning opportunities to all students. Schools that meet the varying needs and interests of students and provide avenues for open and honest communication and debate. Schools that address the meaningful and deep questions that students have. In other words, schools that incorporate the researched transformative approaches discussed in previous sections of this study.

Darling-Hammond states that "we need policies that allow and encourage schools to engage in the kind of democratic dialogue that fosters the development of a polity, a community with a shared purpose" because "the new model for school reform must seek to develop communities of learning grounded in communities of democratic discourse" (p.53).

Meier (1997) agrees and states that:

This way of thinking leads to rejecting top-down reforms unless they are useful to the creation and sustenance of self-governing learning communities responsible for collaboratively and publicly deciding really important issues. The kind of education we want for our young requires schools that see themselves as membership communities, not service organizations. In such communities ideas are discussed, purposes argued about and judgment exercised by parents, teachers, and students because that is at the heart of what it means to be well educated: having one's own wonderful ideas. (p.146)

While acknowledging the tremendous complexity of schools and genuine reform, Gardner states, "I believe that the most appropriate model for talking about school change is the idea of *building a new community*" (p.84, emphasis in text). This metaphor for schools is in contrast with the factory or industrial metaphor and according to Gardner is in opposition to the top-down administrative agenda which has identified the old model. "In a community, everyone has a voice" (p.84). He describes the workings of this community where:

its members must work together over time to develop reasonable goals and standards, work out the means for achieving such goals, have mechanisms to check whether progress is being made, and develop methods for changing course – sometimes dramatically – if progress is not being achieved. In a viable community, members recognize their differences and strive to be tolerant, while learning to talk constructively

with one another and perennially searching for common ground. (p.84)

Goodlad also agrees that dialogue is key to progress and change. He makes his point with a quote from Cremin who states that "the proper education of the public and indeed the proper creation of publics will not go forward in our society until we undertake anew a great public dialogue about education" (1994b, p.13). Cremin also calls for addressing what he terms "among the most important questions that can be raised in our society" (p.13). These include the critical issues of what knowledge, skills and values do we hold in common? Cremin maintains that when these questions are asked, "We are getting at the heart of the kind of public we would like to bring into being and the qualities we would like that public to display" (p.13). Keene and Zimmermann state that "asking the tough questions and providing a venue for conversation about them is, perhaps, our most important work" (1997, p.101).

The issue of dialogue is carried to a higher and broader level by Eisner. He maintains that genuine and deep dialogue opens up:

the kind of discussion that educational practice should but does not now receive. Virtually every set of educational events, virtually every educational policy, virtually every mode of school organization or form of teaching has

certain virtues and certain liabilities. The more that educational criticism can raise the level of discussion on these matters, the better. (1985, p.237)

He also states the importance of viewing issues and policies from many different perspectives for "the denial of complexity, in educational matters, as in politics, is the beginning of tyranny" (p.237).

Another issue highly related to transformational educational reform is the recognition of the interconnectedness of schools with the society at large. This has been addressed previously but it needs to be reemphasized here when discussing infrastructure. Caine, Caine and Crowell underscore this point when they state that:

Our challenge is to realize that all our problems are somehow related. They are connected to each other and they cause each other. We will finally turn education around, in our classrooms and in our communities, when we adequately grasp the nature of that connectedness. Then we will also see how to deal with our problems simultaneously. (1994, p.5)

The multitude of problems affecting our society at large are reflected in our schools. Peterson calls for an acceptance of this interconnectedness and warns that "our schools, our cities, our children will not survive the tide of poverty, inequality and violence without a social

movement that demands from the whole society what many are demanding from schools alone" (1995, p.81).

Moffett seeks a solution to the problems of society that are rooted in alienation and separation. He maintains the human need to bond is very powerful and when this need is met, society benefits. He states that:

people who learn to feel good and find meaning through the community-as-school will not only stop being problems themselves but also learn to help those who remain charges on the society...the best public education of the future will consist of good opportunities to bond with other people and the rest of creation. (1994, p.299)

Goodlad also calls for schools that are supported by and connected to the rest of the community. He states that the "existence of a good school depends heavily on the nature of its connections with the rest of the community ecosystem" (1994a, p.197) and "the rhetoric 'Good schools make good societies' appears to be upside-down. A more accurate depiction would be 'Good societies have good schools'" (p.199).

Renewed attention to teacher education and preparation is seen by many as another key component to improved infrastructure. Many theorists call for a renovation of professional teacher education in order to more successfully carry out the important transformative

approaches in curriculum, instruction and assessment (Darling-Hammond; Goodlad; Eisner; Caine and Caine; Mayher; Hart).

In 1975, Hart was highly critical of teacher education and quoted Medley and Mitzel who bitterly stated that:

An honest appraisal of the content of teacher training would reveal that it does not resemble the rigorous quantitative set of laws which form the substance of the training of architects or engineers as much as it resembles the treasured store of traditions passed on by one witch doctor to another. (p.9)

The Caines also lament the condition of most teacher education which they believe "builds on the thinking and practice dominated by the industrial model and factory metaphor" (1997b, p.191). They maintain that:

Teachers within universities are still largely instructed in how to "deliver" content and skills to students, how to control student behavior using punishment and rewards, and how to grade students on the basis of work done. This kind of teaching becomes an inadequate foundation for the Information Age and for learning extended by technological possibilities. (p.191)

They advocate for the preparation of what they term Perceptual Orientation 3 thinkers, whose "richer and more complex repertoire and functioning makes possible teaching for deep understanding" (p.190). They propose a very specific model for teacher education programs which includes

1. Developing a Coherent Mental Model of Learning
2. Instruction – Mastering the Instructional Approaches
3. Understanding Technology as a Way of Infusing Life and Meaning
4. Using Perceptual Orientation 3 Thinking as the Foundation for Helping Students Master Multiculturalism within a Democratic Society
5. Progressing from Discipline by Coercion to Creation of Collaborative Communities
6. Curriculum – Functioning in a World That Makes Sense. (pp.192 - 194)

Goodlad has been a leader and proponent of improved teacher education for many years. He strongly asserts that "the malaise that this nation is beginning to sense is a correlate of shameful neglect of the educational ecology of which teacher education and schools are critically important parts" (1994a, p.15). He sees teacher education as the key factor in improved schools and advocates for school-university partnerships that "offer promising mechanisms for building into the lives of all involved increased attention to reflection and the importance of continuing intellectual growth" (1994a, p.63). Goodlad has come

to the firm conclusion that we will not have markedly better teachers and schools until school-university collaboration succeeds in ensuring under its broad umbrella units for teacher education – centers of pedagogy – that include as a fixed, permanent part of their structure enough renewing partner schools to

embrace each successive cohort of student teachers. (1994a, pp.108 - 109)

Eisner also champions the concept of closer collaboration between teachers and university professors and sees this cooperation as a benefit for schools. He believes "as true parity develops between professors and public school teachers, a more congruent relationship between teacher education programs and the educational possibilities of schooling is likely to develop" (1994, p.7).

According to these theorists, when all the stakeholders in the educational system recognize and accept the interconnectedness of our schools with the larger society, the importance of and need for meaningful and deep dialogue, and the need for improved and extended teacher education and support, an important foundation will be established on the road to positive infrastructural change. In addition, education needs an infrastructure that provides government support, but not control, that considers the needs of the business community as just one part of the needs of society in general, and that considers the individual needs of the learner as the most critical component in the learning environment.

CHAPTER FOUR: DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This is a qualitative applied research study that incorporates a variety of descriptive methodologies. It begins with a review of federal education policy over the past two decades and then explores current educational policies in the states of Alaska and California. In an extensive literature review, it explores the current models of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and infrastructure in our schools and contrasts these models with what the current research in learning theory suggests should be happening. It also incorporates interviews with practicing educators to investigate and describe the impact the current policies are having on them, their classrooms, and their students. It seeks to explore possible corroboration that may exist between researched theory and the beliefs and practices of seasoned educators. Lastly, this study draws some conclusions based on the research and interview findings and makes recommendations for possible action and future study.

As stated in the introduction to this study, one method for school improvement that has not been investigated on a large and consistent basis is implementation of the enormous base of research that has

been done in recent years in the area of cognitive learning theory. It is the premise of this study that this needs to happen.

Due to the breadth of this study, it is obvious that limitations are involved. Although incorporating disciplined subjectivity, the readings and research represent philosophical orientations similar to my own. I have a firmly developed school of thought that is compatible with the concepts of whole language, constructivism, best practices, brain-based learning, and multiple intelligences theory. Therefore, these orientations are represented in the literature reviewed.

Also because of the breadth of my topic, I could not possibly address all the important issues impacting schools. Therefore, I was selective and relatively brief in my treatment of what I considered the core issues in curriculum, instruction, assessment, and infrastructure. My intent was to synthesize the research of experts and theorists that represent a unified school of thought. In addition, the amount of information and data that is related to this study is tremendous. It necessitated selectivity as to what would be included and no doubt some important perspectives were neglected.

Another limitation is the small number and purposeful selection of the teacher interview participants. Their responses are representative of highly experienced, progressive educators and responses could have been quite different with a sampling of either less experienced or more traditional teachers.

The delimitations of this study include the fact that for time reasons, I had to limit my policy review. I chose the states of California and Alaska as I live in Alaska and am presently going to school in California. I taught in both states and have teaching colleagues in each location. I also narrowed my focus by reviewing only those policies that are relatively recent and selecting those that, in my opinion, are currently having the greatest impact on schools, teachers, and students in California and Alaska.

For the participant section of this study, I interviewed a total of eight teachers, four from Alaska and four from California. I used purposeful selection procedures for the teacher participants. I was looking for highly experienced, knowledgeable teachers with a broad perspective on educational issues. I also wanted representation that would be consistent with my policy review. I know each of the participants personally, have

taught with five of the eight, and have worked in some capacity with the other three.

The teachers' work experiences range from nine to 35 years and although all are currently teaching at the elementary level, three have also had experience at the middle and high school levels, and one also taught at the pre-school and college levels. Three of the teachers have only taught in their respective home states, while the other five have had multi-state experiences including Washington, Arizona, South Dakota, Texas, Montana and Alabama. The participants were guaranteed anonymity and their responses are found in the appendices. The first four, A - D, are California teachers and E - H are Alaska teachers.

The interviews were accomplished with two rounds of standardized open-ended questions. One of the foreshadowed problems I considered when approaching this study was the logistical issue of interviewing in Alaska while attending school in California. I overcame this problem with some degree of success by having the first round of interviews done as an in-depth open-ended questionnaire that was sent to all participants and then returned in hand-written or typed form. This was done in January and February. It

included eleven questions posed to explore some general information areas and to gain some perceptions about issues impacting teachers today. I was looking for patterns and trends in their responses to develop more in-depth and focused follow-up questions for the second round interview. Responses to these questions are located in Appendix B.

The questions were

I. Personal Data

- A. What is your teaching history? (How long, where and what levels?)
- B. What are some of the biggest changes or shifts that you have observed and/or experienced during your teaching career?

II. Teaching Philosophy

- A. What are some of your strongest held beliefs about learning?
- B. What are some of your strongest held beliefs about teaching?
- C. How would you describe yourself as a teacher? (Brain-based approach? Constructivist? Traditional? etc.)

III. Current Educational Policies

- A. How are current policy decisions affecting you as a teacher? (standards, accountability, assessment, etc,)
- B. How do you feel current policy decisions are affecting students? (same)

C. Do you see a dichotomy between your personal educational philosophy and the policies? Please explain your answer in detail.

IV. Coping Strategies

A. If there are contradictions between your philosophy and the reality of current policy, how do you deal with these contradictions both personally and professionally? In other words, how do you cope?

B. What are some observations you have made as to how other teachers seem to be coping?

C. If you were to describe the general morale of your teaching colleagues today, what would you say?

Taking the results of these questionnaires, I developed five follow-up standardized open-ended questions for the second round of taped interviews. There was divided opinion about standards in the first round, whereas, all participants expressed deep concerns about standardized testing. Therefore, the selection and wording of questions one and two in the second round. Question number III-C in the first round also had unanimous positive response from the participants -- thus leading to questions four and five in round two.

The second round of interviews was accomplished in March in Alaska during the spring recess and in April in California. The Alaska interviews were done in my home and the California interviews at various locations depending on

convenient circumstances and schedules. I sent the second round questions ahead in order for people to give them some thought. Some chose to make notes, but all spoke without script. Their responses are in Appendix C. The second round of questions were

1. What do you see as some of the pros and cons concerning the current standards movement?
2. What do you see as the most serious consequence of the current standardized testing movement?
3. Historically, how have your students ranked on standardized test scores?
4. What are some of the intangibles that you think should be considered when discussing or evaluating student success?
5. If you were able to influence policy makers and/or parents, what would your message be?

The entire interview process was controlled in that it did not vary from one participant to the next. The questions were uniform and the interviewer role remained at all times as that of a controlled, disciplined outsider. In reviewing the data, the contents of participant responses were analyzed for three general components: reoccurring themes, issues, and threads of commonality; obvious contrasts or differing responses; and responses that matched, reinforced, or related to the research

covered in the literature review. The specific findings are shared in chapter five.

CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS

The findings from the teacher participant interviews were analyzed for three specific characteristics. I was interested in where teachers expressed common themes and issues, where and when their responses noticeably differed from one another, and lastly and most importantly, when their responses matched or backed-up the research on learning theory. The questions are addressed one at a time and the findings are summarized as briefly as possible. The specific and exact responses to round one questions can be found in Appendix B and responses to round two in Appendix C.

First Round Interview

In the first round questionnaire, question I-B asked about big changes and shifts that had been observed or experienced during the various teaching careers. Seven of the eight responses discussed in one way or another the swing from a traditional textbook centered approach to more awareness and incorporation of researched approaches, such as whole language, student-centered learning, problem solving, etc. Then they noted the recent swing back to a standardized approach to learning and instruction with a tightening of control through instructional methodology,

standards, and testing. One teacher reinforced much of the research when he stated, "In seventeen years, I've seen many changes. The most recent, and I think the most harmful, is the reliance on standardized test scores to drive the curricula." Only one mentioned "the biggest shift has been in the societal expectations placed on public schools. For many years programs have been added to the school day and the curriculum has been expanded to include more and more social issues." However, this reality is another influence backed by research.

Question II-A addressed the issue of strongest held beliefs about learning. Regularly repeated responses included the fact that all children can learn, and learning is a natural instinct driven by curiosity. One participant pointed out that "learning should be considered a most natural instinct of children, not something we make them do."

Additionally, learning requires a variety of materials, resources and different types of assessments. Another oft repeated comment concerned the uniqueness of learners. A participant commented that "after 25 years in the process of education I 'know' every child is an individual with strengths and weaknesses. No one approach,

method or medium works for all or even a majority of students." Another made the point that "all children deserve to be honored and respected for what they bring to school; their culture, their languages and their strengths and weaknesses."

Another requirement for genuine learning that several mentioned was that learning needs to make sense and be meaningful for the learner. One stated, "I believe that children learn those things that they are made to feel are important to them. Therefore, if any learning is to take place the material presented must be made relevant to each student."

Developmental appropriateness and the issue of being willing to take risks were also addressed. "I think learning is developmental, tied to different stages of growth for different kids at different times," and this participant added, "I believe a carelessly issued word or task can undo weeks and weeks of learning." These points were reinforced and expanded by another participant who stated that "learning is a complex, developmental, interactive, integrative process. To truly be learning, the emotions must be engaged, the thinking challenged, the curiosity sparked, and the learner safe enough from

humiliation and total defeat to take 'risks.'" These educators were all reinforcing each other and backing up the research from their own practical experience. These were not the only important shared beliefs about learning but they were mentioned the most often.

The next question dealt with strongest held beliefs about teaching (II-B). This question generated many different descriptors, demonstrating a wide variety of perspectives about this very complex and demanding profession. None of the descriptors were in opposition to each other, and most were supported by research. The most oft repeated response was that teachers are first and foremost learners themselves. This perspective was supported by one participant who stated succinctly, "I think the best way to learn is to teach" and another who stated "teaching effectively requires passion and a love of learning" and a third who said "teaching is a continuous learning process." A last noteworthy comment was "some of the best teachers are our students."

Other descriptors included the importance of modeling a love of learning to students and orchestrating creative ways to engage students' natural desire to learn. One participant defined important teaching components as

"modeling, guiding, and at times prodding" and another eloquently stated "the teacher then is the nourisher, the interest enhancer, and the salesman of life ideas."

Participants also mentioned the importance of teachers helping students "to view themselves as learners and problem solvers," and "teachers must make a personal connection to the student and to his/her family." Others noted the role of teachers to "build on their students' strengths and lead their students to independence in learning how to learn."

In addition, it was noted that teaching needs to be personally rewarding. One stated that "teaching is a 'calling' demanding more of us than anyone can imagine and thus, rewarding us, not in the traditional sense of money so much as personal satisfaction." Another made the point that "teaching should be regenerative, emotionally engaging, nurturing to the teacher's spirit and joyful." Due to the pressures of the times, this same educator lamented, "I do not find it to be that way anymore."

Question II-C asked the participants to describe themselves as teachers. Three of them stated they were students of brain-based instruction, one also with constructivist leanings. One considered herself

constructivist, but was fearing traditional leanings were erupting due to the current times. Another received graduate training in constructivist practice but also stated her traditional background influenced her teaching. The gentlemen both referred to themselves as eclectic or cross-bred. Only one referred to herself as primarily a traditional teacher due to her own training and learning experiences. She qualified her traditional orientation somewhat as she provides choices for students, integrates art experiences into her instructional program and uses many different grouping structures.

The responses to question III-A, how policies are affecting you as a teacher, were eloquent and at times angry. Teachers expressed a great deal of concern and worry about themselves and their students. Their frustrations and concerns are reflected in the research. One teacher, who is a proponent of standards, expressed great alarm about the way they were being implemented in California. As she stated, "holding students and teachers accountable for teaching standards in the first or second year they are introduced, and before resource materials are equally accessible to all students, is neither just nor fair." She went on to state "AND to use just one means of

assessment, a standardized test *that does not test the standards, seems unconscionable*" (emphasis in text). The issue of testing and test scores was a big concern to all of them. One teacher lamented that "for the first time in my career as a kindergarten teacher, my K students will have to take a reading test at the end of the year," and another stated "I have put too much pressure on kids to perform well on tests and I don't like myself for it."

Others were critical of the fact that many policy decisions "ignore the needs of individuals." As one teacher commented

These policy decisions are often at odds with my beliefs about children and education.... I want to teach and assess with a full view of the student, while standards and standardized assessment takes a quick snapshot that is very often inaccurate, and always limited.

Many expressed the concern that the policies are created by non-educators who often have little understanding of teaching, learning, and the real workings of schools and classrooms. There is resentment and some alienation. As stated by one participant, "I feel my judgment and professional integrity are being swept aside as nothing." Another angrily asked "what other profession or trade has a group in charge who knows nothing about that profession or trade?" She went on to say that "the current

situation here is demeaning and humiliating. This is unfortunate because I have worked diligently at trying to work with and not against....I have tried to remain positive."

Another seasoned veteran took a slightly different approach to the policies. He has refused, thus far, to get too concerned about the mandates. "I'm concerned about kids and have written my share of letters to the editor....Quite frankly, I close my door and do what is best for kids...so far."

When asked how the policies are affecting students (III-B), the responses again reflected the research. The most common response dealt with fear and stress about passing to the next grade level. Students are worried and the testing is at a high stakes level, especially in California. One respondent worried that "there is a lot of concern/fear/anxiety over 'passing' more than on learning and growing as a learner." Another lamented that "students are panicking over the possibility of retention and pressure to do well on testing, and have become very 'one right answer' oriented." On the positive side, the point was made by a couple of respondents that there has been an

increased sense of responsibility for learning on the part of some students.

Another common concern was the amount of time students are spending taking tests. As one respondent pointed out:

Our students in third and sixth grade are taking the Gates reading test (spring and fall), the ITBS, the Cat 5, the state proficiencies and any authentic assessments the teacher needs to give. Everyone else takes these minus the state proficiencies. Weighing the pig doesn't make it any fatter!!

The lack of focus on other valued aspects of student learning was also a commonly expressed concern. One teacher commented that "for many students, personal strengths and intelligences may be underemphasized or worse, totally ignored." The self-esteem issue was also mentioned by several. A respondent lamented, "I think the result is that students are infinitely more aware of their inadequacies and are ready to compare themselves with everyone in the world based on their performance on a tool that does not test their true abilities."

Some expressed the belief that students are being cheated out of a more valuable education. One stated that students "are being denied their right to the best education possible and being put into a box that will not develop their ability to be thinkers for the 21st century."

Another respondent addressed the issue of teacher energy and how it impacts students and their learning. She stated, "I believe my students are happy, but unnecessary energy is spent on fighting for or against, on keeping what we know is good for children, etc., rather than spent on planning and preparing and listening to children."

Question III-C, which asked if there was a dichotomy between their educational philosophy and the policies, received a unanimous "yes." One respondent summed up a fairly prevalent perspective when she commented that "I can't explain the enormous sense of hopelessness that this policy shift has produced."

There was a good deal of concern expressed about the emphasis on testing overshadowing genuine teaching and learning. One person commented that:

The emphasis on teaching to the test (while acknowledging that it is noble and good to have high standards for everybody), is overlooking all the current research on how children learn, and is narrowly defining learning as that which is measured by filling in blanks on a standardized test.

Others added similar comments and stated their concern about policies viewing students as numbers. "The policies (standardized testing dependence, mandatory retention) treat students as numbers, statistics, and seek to quantify

information that is not quantifiable." This opinion was reinforced by another person who stated, "I look at students holistically and individually, local policies born of a very narrow conservative view of education, insist on viewing students through numerical test results."

Question (IV-A) concerning how individuals are dealing with perceived contradictions between their philosophy and the current policies, both professionally and personally, brought many and varied responses. First, it is interesting to note that they all continue to maintain positive and professional attitudes towards their classroom responsibilities. One stated that "I know the standards and I incorporate all of them in real reading and writing activities." Another said, "On the short term I am simply getting up and going to work each day and doing my best for that day or that week." She added that "there are lots of things that happen each day to make it worthwhile."

Another stated

I have endeavored to become very familiar with the Standards. I have (reluctantly) worked on test-related worksheets with my students. I am reading and studying about better ways to teach reading and writing and am helping to facilitate classes for teachers in our district on such matters.

However, this same person stated, "But, I constantly feel disheartened about the work I am doing, and how well I am preparing the students to be successful on 'the test'." On the personal side, she said, "I feel like a fish out of water, in that I don't seem to belong in my own profession any more. The thought of leaving the teaching profession permeates my work, almost daily." In her closing comments on the subject she stated, "I do not want to be a part of this monolithic, tyrannical, judgmental, panicked, joyless 'educational' system."

Another stated, "When it comes to deciding what a student needs educationally, I use my experience, education and professional judgment. If there seems to be a conflict between my judgment and a policy, I follow my judgment." This educator has been teaching for 25 years and he stated that he is "at a point in my career that if I am forced to follow procedures to which I am philosophically opposed, I will leave the field of education." A similarly seasoned educator made the remark that "I do what I have long done...when things shift...I simply smile, close the door, and teach!" Although, she admitted "on the personal level, I am not doing at all well...the joy I have felt is being sucked out of me by the indifference to what this back-lash

of thought is doing." She eloquently went on to state that "fear, and the sense of not being able to trust are powerful underminers....I feel akin to the poor people in Mozambique clinging to the treetops while the flood waters roar about me."

When asked (IV-B) how these teachers perceive their colleagues to be coping with the policies, the answers encompassed several general strategies. Some stated that many of the teachers are seeking "out any and all materials available to them to help prep their students for testing" and others "are more publicly (at staff meetings, for example) giving lip service to the 'techniques' they are using to increase test scores." Another teacher made the observation that "some teachers are seeing only black and white as they assess their students, - test scores count, authentic assessments from running records, writing samples written retells, don't count."

Other teachers are perceived to be "rolling along with the flow" or "going through the motions of teaching" or "doing the basic job each day and going home!" Along this same line, one of the participants complained that "many are simply doing what they are told and ignoring what it does to children."

Others see teachers looking to each other for support in these difficult times. One stated, "the positive side to the dichotomy between professionals doing what they know about teaching children and lay decision makers passing contradictory policy is teachers look to each other for support. This has been unifying." Although he added that "the work and constant conflict is wearing." In one last comment related to how teachers are feeling and coping he mentioned that "educators work hard at staying positive. To their credit and professionalism, they still bring energy and enthusiasm to the classroom leaving the politics of education outside."

The last question (IV-C) in this first round dealt with the topic of general teacher morale as perceived by the participants. Almost to the teacher there was agreement that it is low or on the decline. One mentioned cautious optimism, but this was directly related to her staff's feelings about this year's test scores. For the most part "they are feeling pressured, rather than supported, by administration." Another expressed the same sentiment because "not many feel validated or supported by administrators and school board members." One described teachers as "feeling hopeless, helpless and resigned."

Another stated that "It's pretty sad. I never hear much enthusiasm from teachers anymore." Another opinion was that "many are overwhelmed and feeling like they can't teach anymore." On a slightly more positive note, one agreed

Morale is down, but we seem to unite in our misery as we all love the company. There are no more dear and pleasant people on this earth than schoolteachers. So if we're going to be bashed about, we can take it as long as we have one another.

Second Round Interviews

The first question in the second round of interviews was directed at the concept of standards. They had been mentioned by some participants in the first round, but I wanted to hear from everyone -- both pro and con.

There was quite a variance of opinion on standards and to a large degree they split along state lines. Three of the four California participants expressed genuine support for the standards movement. One stated that "in California for a long time we've had teachers doing a lot of different things." Another commented

in the state of California we have needed to have some kind of standard that children were expected to meet....Many teachers chose to not raise the expectations for children and so many children have not been given what I would call an adequate education....they are going to actually stretch children and teachers more importantly.

Another California educator believed that the "standards movement...has been an awakening for teachers as far as the higher possibilities for students." The fourth California participant saw the standards movement as a sign that people are starting to pay attention to schools. For that reason, if nothing else, she saw them as having some benefit.

Alaska teachers were not as supportive of the standards movement. Two saw them as beneficial if they were used as broad guidelines. However, they expressed concern about the current narrowness of many of the state standards. A third participant saw standards as an opening for discussion and debate over what the expectations for children should be. The fourth Alaska educator had nothing good to say about standards. He asked the questions "Whose standards are we trying to teach to and why are these standards more important than other people's standards?"

When the discussion turned to the negative aspects of the standards, there was a great deal of commonality of concern among the participants. Several participants in California mentioned that in many cases they were not developmentally appropriate. For instance, one stated that "A lot of the things that the standards are asking us to do

in kindergarten are not developmentally appropriate with what we know children are ready to learn." She added that this is also a problem at her son's seventh grade level. "They are expecting him to do algebra and geometry and things that he's not ready for. Some children are, but many of them aren't." Another added that "some of the standards are asking for children who are still at the concrete level to be in an abstract level and they aren't there yet...So to me, the trouble is whoever designed the standards, was not thinking about children."

A second major concern was the issue of labeling students based on the standards. The inappropriateness mentioned above "will not make the children rise, it will make them feel defeated because they cannot achieve it, because it is beyond their ability at that particular time." This participant went on to state

I am saddened by that because I feel that teachers, generally speaking, know what children can do at a certain level and can, given the appropriate standards, help the children to rise to the highest of their ability. But I think they are asking for an impossible task and you are putting the children at risk.

Another teacher mentioned that in her opinion, the standards have been "dumped on us I feel in such a way that...if you can't make it, you are either a bad teacher, or

the children are to be looked down upon because they are not succeeding." This opinion was shared by another who point blank stated, "I think students become labeled as failures and that's a very negative impact of the standards." Another made the point:

When you have a whole lot of people saying that this is the important subject and this is the area or height of acceptable performance and above — anything below that is unacceptable in this performance standard, it disregards any student individuality or learning styles.

Teachers observe and accept the great variance that exists within every group of students. As one stated, "I think it's really wrong to put kids in a box and that's the biggest defeating factor."

Another commonly mentioned concern about the standards movement was its tendency to greatly limit a teacher's freedom, creativity and flexibility. One observed that "it is really in many ways demeaning to teachers because it takes away from the humanity of what they are doing and makes them statisticians. And that's really limiting in terms of their job." A second echoed that opinion when he said, "I think it also limits teacher flexibility and creativity and interest — both teacher and student — because now there's a focus on these standards and with the testing you're expected to [do] you know you need to work

towards those standards which can be limiting in other areas." A third educator was even more vehement. She stated that she thinks "the standards truly undermine what children actually learn." She went on to make the point:

I think everybody agrees that we want to have a standard of children being able to learn and value learning and be curious and keep that. But what the standards movement, as I see it, has really done is undermine that whole process. So what we all might agree is a long-term goal -- the current standards movement is undermining that.

Question two evolved from the fact that all the participants had expressed concern about standardized testing during the first round. I wanted to know what they considered the most serious consequence of the standardized testing movement. Most had a difficult time limiting their response to only one issue and elaborated somewhat. However, all responses reinforced the research.

In one way or another, there was concern expressed for the fact that teachers are spending a lot of time teaching to and preparing for the tests. One participant commented that she feared California teachers were joining ranks with what is happening in many east coast states where "you're teaching to the test all year long and that's your focus." Another made the point that in many cases, teachers are "throwing out good educational practices for the sake of

raising the test scores." Along this same line, one participant eloquently stated that this testing movement "disengages teachers from their profession and that is the art and science of teaching. And when you do that you rob children of genuine learning."

A concern expressed by a couple of California teachers was the lack of alignment of the standards with the Stanford 9 test. This was creating a good deal of frustration. One teacher asked, "How can you prepare children to meet the standards that the state requires when you are also giving them a test that has nothing to do with the standards?" She felt "the test is set up for failure." This same teacher also made the comment that she "would like to see the administrators who created this as a standard on how to judge schools, have to take the test and pass it, because I don't think most adults could do it." Another, who questioned the lack of alignment with the standards, added that the test "doesn't take into account where the children started, what resources were available, how they learn and the multiple ways that we can assess their learning."

The limiting and defining nature of the tests was another focus of concern. Standardized testing is

"defining education and I think that's dangerous because it's such a narrow definition." This same respondent made the point that "a lot of times I see standardized tests as testing the most superficial areas of thinking." Another teacher agreed with this assessment and stated that as a result of this focus on testing, "teaching and education becomes low level and mediocre."

In a strongly and eloquently stated opinion, another respondent was greatly concerned about how test results are used to define and compare students:

A standardized test, in and of itself, is relatively harmless...But to take that performance on a given day in a given state of mind and to reflect that child's complete educational background from that one assessment is dangerous and it's harmful and it's very inaccurate...So using the test to compare students and to give them ideas on who they are and where they stand in the whole spectrum of life and make that an important thing for them is dangerous..."

Question three in this round was asked due to the strong opinions held about standardized testing.

Historically, how had respondents' students performed on these tests? One respondent, a kindergarten teacher, had never had to give a standardized test until this year.

Another, had only had to test for three years as a classroom teacher, and admitted that her students scored very poorly at that time. She was teaching at a Title One

school, with a low socioeconomic population and high numbers of English language learners. One respondent stated that her scores have been relatively high, generally in the 70th to 80th percentiles except for "my Hispanic children who do not know English, or my children with low ability who are required to read for all the different tests which is what a standardized test requires."

Five of the respondents stated that generally their scores were in the average range. They had some interesting comments related to this fact. Comments included, "On the average, my students have ranked average," and "They generally followed the bell curve" and "Historically, my students have ranked about in the 50th percentile." Another respondent elaborated somewhat:

I would say that on something like the Gates, my kids reflect what happens with most kids. There's going to be a percentage that scores at the lower end, a percentage at the middle and at the top. I don't know if it is a dismal view, but I think it will always be that way because that's human nature. There will be some at the bottom, the middle and the top and I would challenge anyone that said all their students were at the top.

The fourth question in this round was asked to give the respondents an opportunity to discuss the aspects of learning and education that are not generally measurable, and yet are viewed as important and valuable – in other

words, the intangibles. The responses were varied and yet followed the pattern of recognition of the wholeness of children and the need to acknowledge that wholeness. Their responses also were reflected in the research.

Several spoke about the importance of measuring student strengths. One said, "It would be neat to measure or examine what they are good at – and to be able to speak to their strengths." Another said, "We really need to look at individual student strengths and many times they're not evaluated by some of the more conventional assessments. For example leadership, I don't know of any standardized tests or standards assessment that looks at leadership."

Another characteristic that was mentioned by several was maturity level. As one stated, "Maturity is something that should be looked at when you're considering and evaluating a student" and another added that "those are the kinds of things that impact how they perform on different things."

The ability to work well with others was also stressed as a characteristic that was important for student success and yet one that is not formally measured. Organizational skills and the willingness to take risks and think creatively were also mentioned. As one respondent pointed

out, we live "in a society and a world that needs children who can think, who are inquisitive, who are literate, who need to be able to work with others and come up with ideas that are not necessarily the standard idea." She went on to describe these characteristics as the intangibles that "no test can measure."

This same teacher brought up the issue of emotional intelligence. As she stated, "We know that emotional intelligence is one of the areas that is most neglected and yet is most significant in whether you will be successful in life. And it is not measured."

Along a similar vein was the topic of joy and happiness. One respondent made the point that "a child's happiness in and outside the classroom is critical to how they perform....How much joy a child has is something that we don't test and I think it's really important, especially when we look at the lives of children." Another said

When students enjoy school...if they are happy, if they like to participate...If the students feel safe in their environment and want to learn....Those are the kids who are going to be successful in life, - unless we keep telling them they are not going to be because of their test scores.

The last question in the second round was an opportunity for the respondents to give their personal

opinions on their current situations and give possible recommendations for change. How would they influence policy makers and/or parents if they were able to do so? Their responses were varied, eloquent, and deeply felt. All were in line with researched recommendations.

A couple of them urged policy makers to get into classrooms, lots of them, and find out what is going on there. As one said, "I want you to see what's happening to the kids. And that's what's important. I think that's what we lose sight of." Another had the same recommendation, although she wanted them to spend a week in her room. She wanted "them to see the difference between true teaching and test preparation." She also wanted them to become "engaged with the children to see how intelligent they are and how capable they are and how much we are denying them by doing what we are doing." This same educator "would like parents to start complaining...I'd like parents to say, 'this is not right!'"

Another respondent wanted policy makers to become educated on the issue of statistics and the bell shaped curve. As she sees it:

When you get -- I don't care how many kids you get -- a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand or a million kids, you're going to get something resembling a bell shaped curve statistically.

You're going to get a few highs, a big chunk in the middle and some lows and that's typical. So to say, for a school or a district or a state to say, that we will have all children reading by the third grade or we will have all students achieving 50th percentile by the end of two years is just about statistically impossible.

This teacher also expressed great concern about the lack of respect in the policies for the developmental differences inherent in children. As she stated so eloquently:

It's very important to remember that we are dealing with children, and not little automatons, not little computer programs that can be pre-set in advance to make a certain goal....This is not a flow chart, this is a child.

A fourth respondent urged policy makers to continue "looking at the possibilities of highest quality education....But let's also remember that each person that walks through a classroom door is a whole person." She strongly stated that "our means of assessment should include multiple ways of expressing what we have learned." Lastly, she gave warning to herself as well as the 'powers that be' when she stated

I don't want to slip into the routine or rut that mistakenly identifies people by a number or a percentage growth, because then we have missed most of who this person is, and we are truly limiting the possibilities of what education can be.

The issue of student involvement in educational planning was extremely important to one of the participants. He had mentioned it during the discussion of standards and stressed it here again. As he said, "Students need to be involved more in the planning of their education. Not just in individual classrooms, but at a school level, and district level. And if we're looking at state standards, at state levels." Curriculum was also a concern for him. He recommended that we "simplify the curriculum and encourage greater depth of exploration and study rather than throwing everything you can think of into a curriculum and expect it to be covered." He had other recommendations, including the need to recognize the complexity of educational issues. He warned against the faulty tendency of policy makers to view things simplistically through standardized test scores "because education is so complex and so involved and each individual student is, that to simplify, I think, is dangerous."

One educator called for a return to a 'new renaissance' in education -- "back to a time and place where the individual was respected for their individuality." He spoke of an education "where every student was taken as far as they were able to go, where we could find the things

that they really appreciated and use those for spring boards to teach them other subject areas." And he added, "there is no standardized test for that I'm sorry to say -- I'm happy to say."

Another respondent spoke of her concern around the current narrowing of education. She also addressed the importance of looking at the whole child and developing their strengths. She asked that parents think about what they wanted for their children and made the point that the current policies "seem to be leaving a lot of kids out... and I think we are going to have a problem because we are going to have children out there who are not useful, and are not feeling useful and then what are we going to do?"

The final respondent was very global in her approach to a discussion with policy makers. She used it as a teaching opportunity and asked them some key questions such as "What is the purpose of school?" and "What do you want for your child?" "What do you want them to be like?" and "What's the long term goal?" She was of the belief that the answers to these questions would be fairly universal and similar to her own. She then made the point that "teaching for understanding is what we are supposed to be doing....I think that we need to start looking at children

more closely. We have to start where the kids are and work from there." Because, as she stated, "The point of view that is almost always forgotten is that of the child." She closed her remarks with a very crucial and key observation and question:

I would ask why a child comes to school so curious and so interested when they're so young...and the love of learning is contagious and then I want to know what happens...you know, what happens along that education continuum and that as we exit children that love for learning is gone. And I'd ask those policy makers how they'd contributed to that?

Summary of the Findings

While each interview question has been reviewed and summarized by tying together the teacher participant comments, it is important to summarize the entire interview process and findings in some general terms. Taken collectively, what are these teachers saying? As practitioners in the field, what are their biggest concerns about the world of education in which they are living? What is the effect of the contradictions that exist in their world at present?

First, I would like to address the areas where there seemed to be some difference of opinion or focus in regards to teacher responses. As noted earlier, there was some difference of opinion during the discussion of standards.

In general, the California respondents were supportive of the idea of standards, although they had some deep reservations about the appropriateness of specific standards, lack of resources for teaching them, and lack of alignment to the testing. In contrast, the Alaska respondents, while generally supportive of broad standards, were not as enamored with the current standards due to their specificity, limiting, and defining factors. One was totally against them.

The other noted difference among respondents was again along state lines. In the questions related to policies, standards and testing, the California respondents seemed to generally be addressing the mandates coming from the state level. They were concerned about the pupil promotion and retention policy and the high stakes testing program that are currently affecting students, teachers, schools and districts within the state of California. In contrast, the Alaska teacher responses often seemed to be directed more toward local policy and policy makers rather than state policies. This possibly reflected the small town environment in which the Alaska educators live versus the large urban districts which are represented by the California teachers and also the fact that the Alaska State

policies, except for the high school exit exam, have not yet reached the state-wide high stakes level that they have in California.

The areas where the respondents expressed a great deal of unanimity included their concern about the current standardized, controlled approach to education, their negative views on standardized testing and how it is currently being used, and their total agreement concerning the existence of a dichotomy between their own personal educational philosophies and the current direction of educational policies.

These teachers' opinions and suggestions backed-up and reinforced the research on every topic that was addressed. Their responses were often varied, but also encompassed major themes that kept reoccurring and always were consistent with some important aspect of the research. First, they shared broad perspectives on the definition of learning which included the belief that everyone can learn, that it is a natural instinct and all learn in different ways and bring different strengths, weaknesses and interests to the "learning table." They defined learning as developmental, complex, integrative, and social. They reinforced that it requires a low risk environment and many

different approaches and materials to meet the needs of all learners. They also discussed the importance of the emotional involvement of the learner and the need for learning to make sense and be meaningful for the learner.

They defined the role of the teacher in many and varied ways, but again, all were integrated and closely tied to the research. They spoke of teachers as learners modeling a love of learning to their students. They spoke of the importance of orchestrating creative ways to engage learners and the necessity of guiding, supporting and enhancing the learning experience. They spoke of the importance of making personal connections with their students and helping them to view themselves as successful learners. They spoke of the need for teachers to view their students broadly and respect the inherent differences that exist among them. They spoke of teachers as artists, as having a 'calling' and the importance of being able to enjoy the personal rewards of teaching.

Their recommendations to policy makers also reflected researched recommendations. They encouraged policy makers to become actively involved with the schools. They expressed the need for policy makers to view children holistically, developmentally and individualistically.

They encouraged the involvement of students in educational planning and goal setting. They expressed a need for deeper curriculum, and an educational system that is inclusive of all students. Continually they asked for respect for the complexity of the educational process and stressed the importance of asking the big important questions that can lead to positive long term goals.

In addition to noting the participants' differences and similarities of opinion related to the questions and their frequent coherence with researched recommendations, I would like to make two additional and noteworthy observations. One is the fact that these teachers all share the recognition of and respect for their students as unique individuals. Time and again, their responses reflected this grounded belief. Their discomfort with inappropriate standards, their unified dislike of standardized assessment as currently being used, their continual mention of respect and honor for individual differences in learning styles and rates, their concern about providing valuable and meaningful learning experiences for all of their students, their expressed need to assess learning in multiple ways, and their continual discussion of the need to build on strengths all attest to

this shared belief. In many of their recommendations to policy makers, they were asking for policies that also honor, respect and value the uniqueness of the students within the educational system.

A second observation is that these teachers presently share an overall sense of discouragement and alienation from the larger system or infrastructure. This ranged from a level of disconnection and avoidance of mandated policy to the outright consideration of leaving the teaching profession. While continuing to put forth the best effort possible, these participants expressed frustration, discouragement, lack of validation, lack of support and a sense of helplessness within the larger situation in which they find themselves. They are living and working in a system that is not presently honoring or building on their professional expertise, knowledge, and experience.

Something is very wrong when there is this degree of unanimous frustration and incoherence expressed by professional educators. Some are coping better than others, but to be operating at their optimum level, teachers, like everyone else, need to feel validated. The system is not currently providing this validation.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS

As stated in the introduction to this study, there has been and continues to be, nationwide concern and criticism of our public schools. There is almost universal agreement that our schools have some genuine problems and there is a great deal of effort and money being spent in attempting to solve them. Accountability has become the "name of the game" and the nation's students, teachers, and public schools have become responsible for proving their worth through their achievement of uniform learning standards and their performance on high stakes achievement tests.

The current "legislated" improvement agenda is being imposed upon the nation's schools with very little substantial proof that it is the best way to accomplish the improvement that is desired. In fact, most of the theorists quoted in this study maintain that this agenda is actually counter-productive to the sought for improvement. They contend that the current standards and high stakes testing movement is antithetical to genuine learning. They describe different approaches, referred to in this study as transformative, which they maintain would bring about more positive and long-lasting change in our educational system than the current policy mandates will to do.

The questions become, how and why are these policies dichotomous to these transformative approaches? Why are they contradictory to what teachers have come to believe through their professional practice? What is the result of this dichotomy for teachers and learners? What can we learn from all of this and what recommendations for change and further study can be made? Some answers to these questions have been suggested in the literature review and in the findings from the teacher interviews, but they need to be summarized and explored further here.

In general, the policies enforcing standards, high stakes achievement testing, promotion and retention procedures, mandated instructional approaches, accountability programs that compare and rank schools and students, and monetary staff incentive programs, make some basic assumptions about the learning process that do not align with the research on learning theory. These policies assume that you can force or legislate academic improvement; in other words, you can demand learning to occur. They assume that if you reward and/or punish learners, teachers, and schools, you can improve learning. They assume that everybody learns in the same way and that there is one best way to teach skills and information to

students. They assume that if you work harder and longer, you are bound to learn more. They assume that all learners should learn the same things and that all learners are able to learn the same things. They assume that if standards are set higher, children will achieve more. They assume that if the teacher teaches it, the learners will learn it. They assume that finding learner deficits is the best way to evaluate progress and that the best measure of learning is a standardized achievement test. These assumptions all reflect a simplistic view of learning, and suggest that there are simplistic solutions to the problems of our schools.

The above assumptions are all antithetical to learning theory and the transformative approaches discussed in the literature review. They are also antithetical to the opinions and experiences discussed by the teacher interview respondents. As mentioned in the findings chapter, the teacher respondents' experiences and professional opinions supported and reinforced a great deal of the research in the literature review. These practitioners and the research in learning theory base their conclusions about learning on some very different assumptions from those driving the policies. In the words of the Caines, the

practitioners and the theorists are operating from a different mental model about learning.

Learning theory research and the teacher practitioners both assume the vital importance of recognizing and respecting the inherent differences in learners – their intelligences, their talents, their interests, their learning styles and rates. They assume that genuine learning can not be forced, but rather must be encouraged, and nurtured. Learning comes from within learners as they are challenged with new experiences and make new connections. They assume that learning occurs best in an environment of low risk and high challenge. There is no fear of punishment or humiliation in a genuine learning situation. They assume that learning is a very complex experience that expands and grows as the learner's curiosity and interest are encouraged and developed. They assume that learning involves building on learners' strengths and leading them to construct new knowledge through seeing patterns and making connections with prior knowledge. They assume that learning occurs best when curriculum, instruction, and assessment are closely connected and integrated into the educational program. They assume the importance of creating learning communities

where learners challenge and support one another. They assume that there is not one simple solution to teaching or learning and they recognize the need to continue to explore and incorporate new strategies for enhancing the learning experiences of children.

Existing policies and the research based learning theories are therefore dichotomous because they are based on very different assumptions about learning, learners, teaching, and teachers. The policies are contradictory to preferred teacher practice for the same reasons.

As discussed in some depth in the findings chapter, the result of this dichotomy for teacher practitioners is very grave. They find themselves caught in the middle -- caught between their own professional beliefs and understandings about children and learning and policies that contradict or negate those beliefs and understandings. For many experienced teachers, such as the sampling in this study, who are fully grounded in their personal understanding of how children learn best, implementing these policies can be a professional conflict of great magnitude.

For newer teachers, the conflict may not be as great, as they may not yet have fully developed their own personal

understanding of the learning process. Teaching is a journey for most teachers and working with and learning with children is how most teachers develop their skills and deep understandings about learning. However, due to these policies, newer teachers may never have the opportunity to learn and develop the deep and meaningful instructional practices and techniques that create quality learning environments and make teaching the joyful and rewarding experience that it should be. Either way, be they experienced or neophytes, these policies are deleterious to teachers and their practice.

These conclusions maintain that many of the current educational policies are dichotomous to learning theory and also harmful to effective teacher practice. If this is true, what needs to happen to encourage a more hospitable and encouraging learning and teaching environment in our schools?

First of all, policy makers need to become more inclusive in the process of policy development. In the policy review section of this study, Catherine Marshall stated that "good decision making can occur only after a wide search identifies the needs and concerns of all the people who will be affected by a decision" (p.14). This is

a profound and wise statement. In a democratic society, policy should be developed with the best interests of those being impacted by the policy included in the development process. In the case of educational policy, this means students, parents, teachers, administrators, and ideally, the educational theorists and researchers, should assist policy makers in developing policy that significantly benefits and enhances learning. At this point in time, this kind of inclusive involvement is not happening. Policy is largely being developed by people outside the educational environment who have very little understanding of education or the implications of many of their decisions. Until this is done on a consistent and widening basis, educational practice and methodology will continue to be at the mercy of whatever political agenda happens to be in control. This is unsound educational practice and it has been a very critical foundation for the current plight of our schools.

Secondly, the state-wide and nation-wide institution of standardized testing as a measure of educational success and accomplishment needs to end. As a single practice, it is extremely instrumental in creating negative feelings about school and learning. It is the single greatest

hindrance to the implementation of sound and recognized instructional practices and strategies that can increase and enhance the quality of the learning experiences occurring in our schools. Transformative approaches cannot be implemented in any broad, consistent manner as long as standardized achievement tests remain the sole measure of student, teacher, and school success.

Thirdly, the federal and state governments need to step back and stop controlling the direction of educational improvement in general. Dictating, comparing, judging and punishing as a means for educational improvement must stop. It simply is not the answer. It is fair and probably advantageous for the states to establish broad guidelines defining educational goals. However, for the most effective attainment of those goals, local communities and districts need to be given the freedom and the responsibility for working toward and attaining those goals. In general, I agree with Kane who pointed out that the government needs to limit itself to the issues "relating to financing of education, the enforcement of civil rights, and the safety and well-being of children" (p. 74). Educational funding for local communities could be tied to effective local planning, goal setting and

evaluation mechanisms. Accountability would still be important, but it would be accomplished on many different levels and everyone in the community would have some responsibility. Most importantly, a means to equitably fund all districts must be found. The huge problems related to poorer districts will not go away without added support and additional money.

Fourth, there needs to be a grassroots movement within communities to reassume responsibility for and control of their schools. To a large degree, citizens have become disenfranchised from their schools. They hear a lot about what is wrong with them, but not very much about what is right and what is working. For too long, citizens have been willing to let "someone else" worry about our schools. It is time to stand up and say, "we want our schools back, and we are willing to do the work that will be involved to make them successful." Community forums and public dialogue and discussion would be a positive first step in this direction. Developing a model or investigating some effective ways to bring this important process about would be an excellent area for further study and research.

Fifth, the transformative processes of curriculum, instruction, and assessment that have been discussed in

this study can become encompassing and cohesive instruments for positive change. Schools and teachers cannot be forced to adopt these methods and orientations, but as more and more schools are supported in and allowed to investigate and pursue these practices, curiosity and interest would be ignited and a movement would evolve. The 'proof is in the pudding' so to speak, and over time, the pudding would be sweet and rich indeed.

Tied to the above recommendation, schools of education need to develop programs that introduce these transformative processes and mental models during the course of undergraduate teacher preparation. Then teachers entering the field would come in with orientations and mental models that were already firmly established. There would still be continued need for support and mentoring as a major part of every new teacher's first few years of practice, but this would serve to expand each teacher's horizons, rather than serve as a survival tactic, as it often is today.

Some of these conclusions are influenced by the ideas of others, and some are my own thoughts. However, they each form a separate avenue for investigation, commitment and effort in the search for more just and valid mechanisms

for improving our schools than the policy mandates that are currently being imposed. We must find a way to engage all students. We must find a way to meet the needs and develop the potentials of all of our students. We must also find a way to fulfill the needs of our teachers so that they continue the crucial role they play in the future of our schools.

Any meaningful and positive change in our schools will require a great deal of time and commitment on the part of many people. However, to ignore this important calling could mean the end of public schools and the continuing growth of disparity and unrest in a society that is already suffering from growing inequities and separation of the haves and have-nots among its citizens. It is vital that the energy and commitment for this effort is found inside and outside of our nation's schools so that they can more effectively provide the positive, dynamic, and enriching learning experiences that our students deserve.

APPENDIX A
BRAIN/MIND LEARNING PRINCIPLES

BRAIN/MIND LEARNING PRINCIPLES

Principle 1: The brain is a complex adaptive system.

Principle 2: The brain is a social brain.

Principle 3: The search for meaning is innate.

Principle 4: The search for meaning occurs through "patterning."

Principle 5: Emotions are critical to patterning.

Principle 6: Every brain simultaneously perceives and creates parts and wholes.

Principle 7: Learning involves both focused attention and peripheral perception.

Principle 8: Learning always involves conscious and unconscious processes.

Principle 9: We have at least two ways of organizing memory.

Principle 10: Learning is developmental.

Principle 11: Complex learning is enhanced by challenge and inhibited by threat.

Principle 12: Every brain is uniquely organized.

APPENDIX B
FIRST ROUND INTERVIEWS

Thesis Teacher Interview Questions - #1

Name A
(Not to be included in the data)

Date Feb. 20, 2000

I. Personal Data

A. What is your teaching history? (How long, where and what levels?)

20 years: 4 in Washington State
16 in Yucaipa, CA

7th grade (English): 5 yrs
(2 yrs. in WA) 6th grade : 5 years
5th grade : 3 years (counting current one)
4th grade : 4 years
(WA) 2nd grade : 1 yr.
Kindergarten : 1 yr.
(WA) 2-6th Reading Spec. : 1 yr.

B. What are some of the biggest changes or shifts that you have observed and/or experienced during your teaching career?

① Reading: From scripted instruction → To "Whole language"
(Writing) in basal texts; workbooks on compreh.; phonics, rhyming patterns, controlled vocab. TEST ORIENTED
"leveled" groups
poorly researched, not thoroughly introduced

Backlash to lack of accountability, poor reading & writing skills: Standards-based instruction (with lack of resources to be successful) teach to test. Evaluate students & teachers by test results.

To ← Almost "anything goes" Portfolio assessment Subjective "Student self - " (over)

teacher created spelling, grammar, writing, & comprehension (if at all) core literature sets

A

B. 2. Math: From teach. \rightarrow To Hands-on; experience
 math operations, memorize the concepts of math;
 formulas deduce formulas & why's. Probl. Solving

Students not learning: To \leftarrow
 basics of $+$ $-$ \times \div , fractions,
 decimals. Drill. Teach to
 test format, "Scattered fire"
 approach

FROM:
 3. Teacher is in charge of student learning.
 " " effective if class is in "control"
 students "find out" what they have learned, & how
 successfully, from teacher

to \downarrow
 Brain-based learning theory. Teacher studies
 to understand how human brain learns. Creates
 environment of "community of learners." Challenges
 students to see selves as thinkers, problem solvers,
 learners - accountable for own learning, etc.

to \downarrow (public)
 Test scores tell everyone how well students learn.
 "Play the game" - teach to the test.
 Test scores are in charge of student learning.

A

II. Teaching Philosophy

- A. Strongest held beliefs about learning: All children (and adults) are capable of learning, constantly, with unlimited possibilities. Learning is a complex, developmental, interactive, integrative process. To truly be learning, the emotions must be engaged, the thinking challenged, the curiosity sparked, and the learner safe enough from humiliation and total defeat to take risks. The joy and reward of learning should be intrinsic satisfaction, not stickers and grades from a teacher. Learning should be self-perpetuating, that is, in a nurturing, challenging environment, learning one thing should naturally lead to the desire to learn something else. Learning should be considered a most natural instinct of children, not something we must make them do.
- B. Strongest held beliefs about teaching: Teachers are learners, too; life-long learners, modeling the love of learning to their students. Teaching involves looking at the curriculum from as many different perspectives as possible, and then orchestrating creative ways to engage the students' natural inclination for learning in the subject matter. Teaching also involves valuing and cherishing student input, direction, and innovation when it comes to how, and what, to study. Teaching should be regenerative, emotionally engaging, nurturing to the teacher's spirit, and joyful. (I do not find it to be that way anymore...)
- C. I describe myself as a brain-based learning-theory teacher. I have studied with the Caine's for 8 years now, and endeavor to put into practice what their research reveals to be effective means of teaching for meaningful learning. I also describe myself as a life-long, compulsive, engaged learner – I delight in discovering the *thinking* that leads to improving the art of teaching. Example: Books such as Mosaic of Thought, and Creating Writers totally engage me in learning more about myself as a learner, and thus about myself as a teacher.

III. Current Educational Policies

A. Standards: I feel having standards is important, and has been missing for a long time. However, I feel standards are goals we work toward over time, and may not be able to reach in a one-year time period. Standards should be expected of all students, and instruction modified, adjusted, and enhanced so that all students, in time, find success (though it may be to differing degrees.) HOWEVER, holding students and teachers accountable for reaching standards in the first or second year they are introduced, and before resource materials are equally accessible to all students, is neither just nor fair. AND to use just one means of assessment, a standardized test *that does not test the standards*, seems unconscionable. AND to punish schools for not raising their API by a certain number of points each year (our threat is that we'll lose our principal, and some teachers will be moved), seems in direct opposition to what learning theory says: you enhance learning (and reaching high standards) with high challenge (which this is), AND LOW THREAT (which this isn't).

B. Policy decisions are affecting students in that Curriculum Standards, "make-it or break-it" Standardized tests, AND a new state and district *retention* policy have all been introduced at the same time. As a result, students do have an awakened sense of responsibility to achieve, but some do not have enough scholastic background to grow by leaps and bounds in just one year. So there is a lot of concern/fear/ anxiety over "passing," more than on learning and growing as a learner. Fourteen of my students are being required to take part in an after-school "intervention" program, focusing on math and reading skills, in order to lessen the possibility that they will be retained for not performing up to the standards by June. Honestly, I think many of them need the boost and additional help, but growth and learning isn't going to miraculously occur in 3 months' time, before testing!

C. There is definitely a dichotomy between my personal educational philosophy and the policies. The emphasis on teaching to the test (while acknowledging that it is noble and good to have high standards for everybody), is overlooking all the current research on how children learn, and is narrowly defining learning as that which is measured by filling in blanks on a standardized test. I do feel there is validity in taking these tests, but I don't feel they define, comprehensively, learning as it should be measured in schools.

IV A. ~~4~~

A.

Quite frankly, I don't think I am dealing very well with the increasingly stark contradictions between my philosophy of learning and the state and district policies now in effect. I have endeavored to become very familiar with the Standards. I have (reluctantly) worked on test-related worksheets with my students. I am reading and studying about better ways to teach reading and writing, and am helping to facilitate classes for teachers in our district on such matters. I continue to have the students reflect on themselves as learners, as readers, as writers, but many of them have so little experience in thinking this way that the effort may not be as meaningful as I would like it to be for them. But, I constantly feel disheartened about the work I am doing, and how well I am preparing the students to be successful on "the test." I feel like a fish out of water, in that I don't seem to belong in my own profession any more. The thought of leaving the teaching profession permeates my work, almost daily. For the first time in many years (at least eight), I no longer want to do this work which has been my passion for so long. I love my students, and am committed to helping them discover what it means to cherish themselves as learners, and to find joy in doing that. But I do not want to be a part of this monolithic, tyrannical, judgmental, panicked, joyless "educational" system.

B. Other teachers seek out any and all materials available to them to help prep their students for testing. Homework packets include test prep practice. There is a lot of "going through the motions" of teaching, but much less joy and love for the children is exhibited.

C. General morale of my teaching colleagues is cautiously hopeful (our school performed okay last year, though there is definitely room for improvement.) They aren't panicked, but they are somewhat on edge. They are feeling pressured, rather than supported, by administration. These curriculum and assessment policies, along with other issues of non-support from district administration toward our school, have led to a feeling of general distrust and caution about any and all dictates coming from our school district administration and school board.

B. Feb. 13, 2000

I. Personal Data

A. Teaching history

I first conducted after-school arts and craft classes at a Jewish Community center in Santa Monica when I was 19 and a student at UCLA. The classes were once or twice a week, and this continued across a couple of school years. Around this time I assisted in the Child Care Center at UCLA, but only for a couple of quarters, working with 2 and 3 year olds. During part of my data processing company career, 1980-1982, I designed and gave training classes (1-day, all day) for bank personnel. I did this about three or four times a year, and the rest of the time gave less formal training by phone or in person. Around 1987 I was an RSP aide for a Rialto with a couple of 2nd and 3rd graders, 1:1, for a few weeks (6 or 7?). In 1988-9 I began subbing in grades K-4, about 4 times per week. I began in my own room after completing student teaching in 1990. I have taught 6th grade, or a 5/6 combo, for the past 9 years, with the exception of one year of teaching 2nd grade in 1995. My work has been in the Colton Joint Unified School District, at Alice Birney Elementary in Colton from '90-'95, and at Jurupa Vista Elementary, Fontana, since '95.

B. Biggest changes

On a personal level, the biggest change was when I switched schools because I did not get along well with my principal. The subsequent school was a very different. In practice, the hugest change is in progress now: the new mandatory retention law in California. Formerly all students were socially promoted. On a lesser level, there were recent (October 99) changes in State and district requirements for math. We are now using a 7th grade book in 6th. Math curricular content has been shifted down a grade or two, so, for example, algebraic concepts are now required in 5th grade. Language arts methods have been tightened up but not really changed, just more accountability forms have been added steadily over the last 4 years. The other change, trying to lower retention numbers, has been the start of "Intensive Instruction". This is extra instructional time for students who show below-average performance on certain quantitative assessments. Additionally, three years ago there was the start of 20:1 ratio in grades K-3. These students will be in my 6th grade class next year (if I stay in 6th) for the first time.

II. Teaching Philosophy

B.

A. Strongest held beliefs about learning

I believe that kids are interested in knowing more, especially if they perceive it to be of value to them in their future. I believe that kids love to make and do real things. I believe that art teaches. I believe different that kids learn in different ways. I believe that learning begins at home. I believe that more about kids is individual, genetically wired, and unpredictable than we give them credit for. (In other words, they are not all alike in more ways than we typically assume. They are full of surprises and it's important to be open to seeing them.) I believe that a carelessly issued word or task can undo weeks and weeks of learning. I believe that trust is needed for learning to occur best. I believe that learning has to be looked at as something that is never wholly complete, but is a process, a work in progress. I think learning is developmental, tied to different stages of growth for different kids at different times.

B. Strongest beliefs about teaching

I don't think everyone is cut out to be a teacher. I think that teaching requires flexibility and creativity. I think that there is no single formula for teaching, like students, there are too many components in the mix for one size to fit all. I think the best way to learn is to teach. I think the lessons you set out to teach are often not necessarily the ones that are learned and that's okay. I think that teaching has to be somewhat individualized for the learner as well as the teacher, in order to work at all, since not everyone comes into a learning situation with identical experiences.

C. Self-description as a teacher

In fact, I think I use mostly traditional approaches. I say this because I recognize that that is my comfort level in my present environment and because I realize that much of what I do is based on both my training and my personal experiences as a student. (Kind of like parenting the way we were parented?). I do like to use more art than most teachers I know, and I like to mix up the day with different structures (whole group, partner, small group) as much as is practical. I give more student choices than traditional teachers; a more democratic approach, I think. I don't know if this fits any particular category.

III. Current Educational Policies

B.

A. How current policy decisions affecting me as a teacher...

Very emotionally. The current retention law is making me very uncomfortable on lots of levels. I'm concerned about the repercussions from parents if I say to retain (or in some cases promote) their child. I'm concerned about district pressure if our retention numbers are too high or too low. I'm concerned that it will reflect on me if a child does not pass while in my class. I worry that if I retain a child he/she will add to the dropout numbers. I worry that by not promoting them to middle school I will be damaging them emotionally. I worry that at some point test scores will control my salary. I have put too much pressure on kids to perform well on tests and I don't like myself for it. I'm concerned that too many untrained or poorly trained teachers will teach kids before I get them and I'll be held accountable for everything that kid didn't get. (It is somewhat like this now.) I worry that kids in RSP will get lost in the system. I worry that my bilingual kids will be unfairly penalized. I am frustrated by the complexity and volume of math I am required to teach. I am unhappy that mentor teaching and inservice days have been cut from the budget. I wish we had better technology support; we buy machines and no one has time or money to train to use them. I wish our district had PE teachers, art teachers, better music teachers and money to provide elementary students with instruments to use, and well trained people for yard duty so teachers wouldn't have to do it. (Some districts have these!) There are probably other things I could add, but these are the biggies.

B. How current policies are affecting students....

Students are panicking over the possibility of retention and pressure to do well on testing, and have become very "one right answer" oriented. There are a few kids who have stopped goofing off and have really improved their school behaviors and productivity. There have been more parents involved. There have been greater response levels to homework and notes home. There has been an increase in speculation and worry over which peers will be retained. Kids are getting even better at copying other kids' work.

B.

C. Do I see a dichotomy between personal philosophy and policies...

Yes. The policies (standardized testing dependence, mandatory retention) treat students as numbers, statistics, and seek to quantify information that is not quantifiable. The growth of a kid is not something that is fairly measured by numbers alone. This is true (to me) because of several reasons. I see that kids grow in fits and starts - sporadically - with different advances occurring at different stages in their lives and vast differences in their experiences and developmental levels. Also, these policies define kids by certain kinds of numbers only and do not take into account other qualities in which a student might excel. They lump too many unlike kids together and try to extrapolate like data about "all kids". There is not enough of a basis allowed for responding to individual kids' needs (also a problem of 33 or 34:1 class size at my grade level) or kids' creativity. I also get frustrated because the current policies lay too much blame at the feet of the teacher.

IV. Coping Strategies

A. Personal and professional coping with contradictions.

(Well, complaining helps!!) There are a couple of ways in which I am coping personally. On the short term I am simply getting up and going to work each day and doing my best for that day or that week. There are lots of things that happen each day to make it worthwhile, things like kids' insights, good lessons well taught, fun projects, kids falling in love with a book or grasping a new idea. These are the biggest helps. There are chances to take a positive attitude both with and from new teachers, who have a lot of enthusiasm, if not experience. In the longer view, I am working hard on my Master's program in order, maybe, both to have a wider personal perspective, and to make future changes both as an elementary teacher and possibly at the teacher-training level some day. I also examine some of the tangible benefits, and let them rise to a little higher level of importance: things like a paycheck and time off between tracks, special projects and programs that are interesting and fun, things that distract from, rather than change, the difficulties.

B.

B. How other teachers seem to be coping...

Other teachers at my site are showing a range of coping (or not) mechanisms. Some are responding to inquiries about retention by saying they will not retain anyone no matter what their scores are. Others (myself included) are not so sure and are delaying the decision (also a coping mechanism) until the last minute in the hopes that more clarity will arrive. A few are rolling along with the flow and will just "do their jobs" with the best intentions and no real outward reaction to policy changes. Some are constantly complaining, talking (not too seriously, I think) of changing careers. Many are looking to move from 4-6 to K-3 so they will only have 20 students which seems to be a way they see of compensating themselves for the increased workload and accountability requirements, as well as providing more assurance of success due to the lower number of kids in the class.

C. General morale...

I would say that the general morale of my teaching colleagues is on the decline. There is also a BIG wait and see attitude as to how the end of the year will come to pass with regard to both retention and student performance on tests. We have been told to raise our school's overall score by ten points and privately most teachers express that they will simply do the best they can and let the chips fall where they may. On the other hand, they are more publicly (at staff meetings, for example) giving lip service to the "techniques" they are using to increase test scores. The 4-6 teachers are really unhappy, for the most part, and frustrated especially in regard to retention. The K-3 teachers are a bit calmer. As the end of the year gets closer, there is a certain kind of exhaustion that is looming. There will be, I'm sure (certainly for me) some changes of staffing, grade levels or tracks, just to keep things new and to present hope for improved and improvable circumstances for many of us.

Thesis Teacher Interview Questions - #1

Name C
(Not to be included in the data)

Date Feb. 14, 2000

I. Personal Data

A. What is your teaching history? (How long, where and what levels?)

I have taught somewhere around (35) thirty-five years. I say somewhere because in my home state I was teaching classes while in my teens and while earning my Bachelor degree (teacher shortage), but not being paid.

I have taught in South Dakota, Alabama, Texas, and California. The past (all) twenty-four years have been all in California.

I have taught pre-school (head start program), elementary (second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth), middle/intermediate/junior (sixth, seventh) high school (tenth and 2 years at a special education high school eleventh and twelfth classes), and university (since 1978 I have taught classes and workshops at this level - all post-graduate level) (there is a certificate for conflict resolution that I developed at UCR).

B. What are some of the biggest changes or shifts that you have observed and/or experienced during your teaching career?

In the early years one of the biggest changes was the establishment and organizing of the union movement which helped teachers see themselves as having power and professional status. It lifted them out of the "I have no control" into "I have something to say here."

The whole language movement, which is very brain-based, though mis^{and}understood as to how to use it.

The work of Renate & Geoffery Caine^{and others} with brain-based approaches and the shifts to constructivism in math, writing, social studies, and science.

The present attempts at control through testing and returning to old practices that don't work. The total turning of backs to research and discovery of how the brain works is appalling.

II. Teaching Philosophy

C.

A. What are some of your strongest held beliefs about learning?

That human beings, all of them, have an innate desire to learn.
That we have different strengths in how we learn and that all of us can use those strengths and develop our weaker areas.

That every human being has a right to be educated and to develop him or herself to the highest possible potential for him or her.

That learning is a life-long pursue of everyone whether realized or not.

That learning takes place everywhere and in everything one does.
That "learning" is not necessarily measured by a "test" or even a part of the present testing frenzy.

That learning and teaching are at their best in a community of mutual respect, support, challenge, and low threat!

B. What are some of your strongest held beliefs about teaching?

That teachers are learners and we must continue our own development from a personal standpoint.

That some of the best teachers are our students.

That teaching is a "calling" demanding more of us than anyone can imagine and thus rewarding us, not in the traditional sense of money so much as personal satisfaction.

That teachers find their best lessons in the moment and engage their students ^{and themselves} in a life-long desire to learn not in some canned curriculum.

C. How would you describe yourself as a teacher? (Brain-based approach? Constructivist? Traditional? etc.)

I would describe me as a combination of ideas. What is termed an orientation three thinker with a heavy leaning to ^{the} brain-based approach as explained by the Caines is probably the best way of stating me. I love what I do when I just teach and do not have to worry about the demands of the state or district.

III. Current Educational Policies

C -

A. How are current policy decisions affecting you as a teacher? (standards, accountability, assessment, etc.)

I feel that my judgement and professional integrity are being swept aside as nothing.

I feel that good intentions to "fix the system" are going to end in its death. That the more "testing" for our assessment and "measuring" of did they meet the standards the less real learning is going on.

B. How do you feel current policy decisions are affecting students? (same)

They are being denied their right to the best education possible and being put into a box that will not develop their ability to be thinkers for the twentyfirst century.

The standards are fine, but how we are attempting to measure, assess, etc. is destroying their value as benchmarks to work toward.

C. Do you see a dichotomy between your personal educational philosophy and the policies? Please explain your answer in detail?

We aren't in the same ball park... apples and oranges... I can't explain the enormous sense of hopelessness that this policy shift has produced.

Fear, as promoted by the state in its testing - which has no tie to the standards - has caused rational thinkers and irrational thinkers from the state, to districts, to sites to become reactive and none thinking. Even the unions are at a loss as to what to do next. Down shifting is the current trend and the more that is top-down directed, the less buy-in.

IV. Coping Strategies

A. If there are perceived contradictions between your philosophy and the reality of current policy, how do you deal with these contradictions both personally and professionally? In other words, how are you coping?

I do what I have long done... when things shift... I simply smile, close the door, and teach! I refuse to stop the process of learning from going on in my classroom. I also teach my students how to take a test and continue to create a community of learners.

On the personal level I am not doing at all well... the joy I have felt is being sucked out of me by the indifference to what this back-lash of thought is doing. Fear and the sense of not being able to trust are powerful underminers. I am still searching for my own higher ground. I feel akin to the poor people in Mozambique clinging to the treetops while the flood waters roar about me... But I know this to shall pass and there will be a way to rebuild if I can only hold on long enough.

I used to be able to rally and help others, now I only seem to be able to take care of myself. - too many years of fighting... I just want to sit by the fire and stay warm.

C.

B. What are some observations you have made as to how other teachers seem to be coping?

Many are simply doing what they are told and ignoring what it does to children... some are looking for some other job or moving out of teaching into administration. Some, like myself, are fighting back a step at a time. Most are frustrated and I see them becoming sapped physically, mentally, and emotionally. The joy is gone.

C.. If you were to describe the general morale of your teaching colleagues today, what would you say?

Feeling hopeless, helpless, and resigned. No one seems to know what to do next. To tell the truth I am plain old fashioned tired... maybe after a good night's sleep, some R+R (this is in reality a battlefield), and some TLC I can get out there and continue the fight... even support others... who knows!

aren, I really thank you for this chance to say what I think. In truth you have helped me clarify and focus. Sorry for any spelling errors and for the lateness.

Love you,

If there is not enough room for your responses, please use the back or attach another sheet of paper. However, please number and letter so as to be very clear about the question to which you are responding.

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR HELP WITH THIS.

Karen

Thesis Teacher Interview Questions - #1

Name D.
(Not to be included in the data)

Date 2/18/00

I. Personal Data

A. What is your teaching history? (How long, where and what levels?)

I am in my tenth year of teaching.
I have taught first grade for five years,
in a self-contained classroom one year
as a second grade teacher (self-contained classrm)
Two years as a K-3 Title 1 Reading Teacher
one half of my day I worked as a Reading Recovery
teacher tutoring struggling first graders the other
half of my day I worked with small groups of
second and third graders and with individual 2nd &
3rd graders coaching them in reading. The last 2 yrs.
I have worked as the Literacy Specialist at my school K-5.
I am currently the K-2 language Arts Mentor for my district
and last year I was a BTSA mentor for 3 teachers at my school.
first six years of teaching were in Pittsburg/Bay Point California a

B. What are some of the biggest changes or shifts that you have observed and/or experienced during your teaching career?

I think the shift from Whole Language
and heterogeneous grouping to skills based
homogeneous grouping in the teaching of
Language Arts. Also the shift from authentic
assmts/portfolios to standardized testing
as being most imp. Problem solving, questioning,
facilitating students learning has now changed to
teaching skills in isolation and checking off the
discrete skills/concepts students have learned. The idea
of the big picture has been exchanged for mastery of small discrete
skills that aren't integrated

D.

1. A. School Wide Title 1 school. This school was very diverse culturally; Blacks, Mexicans, Latin Americans, Vietnamese, Koreans, Filipinos and whites non hispanic. The population was very transient, even though there weren't a lot of apartments. Housing ~~was rented~~ A lot of affordable rental houses in the area. This school has a large ELL population. The last four years I have worked in Temecula in a Targeted Assistance Title 1 school. The population is mostly white, non hispanic, but ~~Mexicans~~ our ELL population is about 100 students in a ^{total} population of about 745 students. The population is fairly stable with a small transiency rate. The general population ~~SES~~ is mid to lower middle class. In my experience this school has a student population that generally performs in the average range on standardized tests and ~~functions~~ for the most part has supportive parents that are ^{able to function as} partners in their children's education.

II. Teaching Philosophy

A. What are some of your strongest held beliefs about learning?

D.

- All children deserve to be honored and respected for what they bring to school; their culture, their language and their strengths and weaknesses.
- Learning should be comprehensible, in other words it needs to make sense
- All children can learn
- Children must be included in their learning goals and encouraged that school is an exciting journey that they get to take.

B. What are some of your strongest held beliefs about teaching?

- All children can be taught
- To be effective; teachers must make a personal connection to the student and his/her family
- Teaching effectively requires passion and a love of learning
- Teachers need to build on their students' strengths and ~~take~~ ^{lead} their students to independence in learning how to learn.

C. How would you describe yourself as a teacher? (Brain-based approach? Constructivist? Traditional? etc.)

I would say that I believe it's important to use the Brain-based approach and the constructivist approach to teaching and learning.

III. Current Educational Policies

D.

A. How are current policy decisions affecting you as a teacher? (standards, accountability, assessment, etc.)

As the Literacy Specialist for my school and the K-2 Language Arts Mentor for my district I am constantly hearing from teachers complaints about having to do all the assessments and concerns that their students aren't performing to the levels they should be. Classroom teachers are worried about being accountable and are adding more weekly tests to their weekly schedule to confirm their students progress or lack thereof. Teachers aren't seeing any "gray area" it's all black and white. I don't believe most teachers are using the assessments to guide their instruction, they are using the assessments to only document a student's grades. I work with many of the students who are struggling in reading, writing and when I communicate a child's strengths to the teachers they often say "Well they're

B. How do you feel current policy decisions are affecting students? (same)

I feel the students stress levels as they know they aren't doing well, because they aren't passing the weekly tests, are having to attend ~~week~~ daily after school reading programs, missing "Specials" each day to attend "Reading Group" with me. My own son is in middle school and his math teacher regularly criticizes his class because they "Don't get the material and they are behind." My son and several other students in the class are Resource Students and their self-esteem is not good.

D.

III A. cont. "

are still failing because they can't pass the test. "
As the K-2 district mentor I hear many concerns from teachers that so many of the standards are too high and not developmentally appropriate and that they can't teach it all, too much to cover.

D.
I believe it's important to use research based practices, some of the new policies and standards aren't based on research.

C. Do you see a dichotomy between your personal educational philosophy and the policies? Please explain your answer in detail?

Yes. I believe that people learn best when they feel valued, can connect the learning to their life and have teachers who have high expectations for each student. Teachers who understand the curriculum and can integrate subjects, constantly assess their students and use those assessments to drive their instruction, ~~not penalize their students~~ and integrate and contextualize skills and concepts into the subjects being taught, i.e. phonics must be taught within real reading and writing activities. Currently our policies are stating that we have the responsibility of teaching a lot of discrete skills that must be regularly assessed. Testing seems to be more important than teaching and learning. Students are being devalued because if they →

IV. Coping Strategies

A. If there are perceived contradictions between your philosophy and the reality of current policy, how do you deal with these contradictions both personally and professionally? In other words, how are you coping?

With the students I am working with I continue to use best teaching practices (research based) I know the standards and I incorporate all of them in real reading and writing activities. With the teachers I work with at my school and in my workshops at the district level I teach them how to assess their students in context, how to use the assessments to drive their instruction and how the standards and skills can be ^{taught} embedded in real reading and writing activities. For example at an inservice I did on how to do Shared Reading with Big Books I outlined how Concepts About Print (skills part of K-1 standards) can

III C. cont...

D.

don't perform well on weekly tests and assessments they aren't making it, even if they are showing growth, if the growth doesn't meet the standard they still get a D or an F on their report card. Teachers are being devalued as well. Many teachers I talk to are forgetting that all the things they need to teach can be easily taught/integrated into (skills) what they're already teaching, i.e. grammar, vocabulary, spelling into writing. The standards are confusing to many teachers who think they have to teach and assess each skill/concept in isolation. The standards have promoted a ~~form~~ frenzy of checklists and black and white decisions and judgement on a student's progress.

IV. A cont...

be taught within the context of a big book. I am also trying to help teachers understand that they need to keep practices that work, if there isn't transfer of the skills or concepts being taught from a lesson it may be that the activity or practice is an ineffective vehicle for teaching a particular skill and that they are the instructional leaders in their classroom and they must be choosy about the practices and strategies they use.

D.

B. What are some observations you have made as to how other teachers seem to be coping?

As I stated before in item 3 A-B (I think) ^{teachers} some are seeing only black & white as they assess their students, test scores count, authentic asmts. from Running Records, Writing samples, written Retell don't count, Some teachers check off the standards as they cover them. Other teachers are incorporating the standards into what they already teach. These same teachers have dropped teaching practices that don't show transfer of skills, and they continue to teach deep (for understanding) periods those who are checking off the standards and covering the curriculum.

C.. If you were to describe the general morale of your teaching colleagues today, what would you say?

Many are overwhelmed and feeling like they can't teach anymore, they feel as if they spend too much time with assessments, and not enough on teaching & learning time. Many have great concerns about their students progress and how it doesn't meet the expectation of the standards.

If there is not enough room for your responses, please use the back or attach another sheet of paper. However, please number and letter so as to be very clear about the question to which you are responding.

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR HELP WITH THIS.

Karen

Thesis Teacher Interview Questions - #1

Name E.
(Not to be included in the data)

Date 2-6-00

I. Personal Data

A. What is your teaching history? (How long, where and what levels?)

After student teaching and receiving my teaching certificate in California I moved to Ketchikan, Alaska to begin my teaching career. I have been in Ketchikan since. I am currently completing my 25th year of teaching in the district. I have taught fourth, fifth, second and third grades. I taught special education in a resource room setting working with intermediate students. I also taught students in the extended learning program. The vast majority of my teaching experience has been with primary age students.

B. What are some of the biggest changes or shifts that you have observed and/or experienced during your teaching career?

In my community the biggest shift has been in the societal expectations placed on public schools. For many years programs have been added to the school day and the curriculum has been expanded to include more and more social issues. Many of the topics teachers are expected to cover were traditionally taught in the home. There has also been a tremendous increase in the politics of education where a greater emphasis is placed on standardization, both in curriculum and assessment.

II. Teaching Philosophy

E.

A. What are some of your strongest held beliefs about learning?

After 25 years in the process of education, I "know" every child is an individual with strengths and weaknesses. No one approach, method or medium works for all or even a majority of students. It is crucial to view students as broadly as possible. Let them show you what they know. If you are limited in your focus as a teacher, you will miss so much of their ability and unique way of expressing their knowledge and self. ~~With~~ teachers materials, resources, assessments et al should be as varied and comprehensive as possible.

B. What are some of your strongest held beliefs about teaching?

Students respond, interact, engage and learn in a safe, accepting environment. Modeling, guiding and at times prodding are important. Students need to view themselves as learners and problem solvers. Teaching students how to access information and use it in a critical way far exceeds any rote memorization. However, specific critical information has to be presented. Collaborative work and individual accomplishments must be celebrated.

C. How would you describe yourself as a teacher? (Brain-based approach? Constructivist? Traditional? etc.)

Since I view myself as an eclectic, I find it hard to put myself firmly in any one camp. However, few would probably view me as traditional. I certainly believe children need consistency and repetition, but ~~well~~ at least as importantly, they need the opportunity to try, fail

E.

and try again to construct meaning.
Knowing when to step in and correct and
when to step back and observe a student work
a problem out independently or with others collectively;
only comes with experience and, at times, patience.

III. Current Educational Policies

A. How are current policy decisions affecting you as a teacher? (standards, accountability, assessment, etc.)

Educational decisions are being made at a state and, more directly, at a local level that ignore the needs of individuals. These policy decisions are often at odds with my beliefs about children and education. As a practitioner, much of my evidence is anecdotal and personal. The emphasis on standardized assessment is so very narrow when looking at the whole ~~edu~~ education of a student. I want to teach and assess with a full view of the student while standards and standardized assessment takes a quick snapshot that is very often inaccurate and always limited.

B. How do you feel current policy decisions are affecting students? (same)

The expanding curriculum and standardized testing affects what I focus on in the classroom. For many students, personal strengths and intelligences may be underemphasized or worse totally ignored. For instance, arts in the schools are not valued. At the elementary level, no teaching staff is hired to teach visual arts. Any instruction and encouragement must come from the classroom teacher who may or may not have a background in visual arts. While

E.

our district is currently reviewing science and math curriculum, for the second time over the past few years, no art or music curriculum has been requested in the past 15 years.

C. Do you see a dichotomy between your personal educational philosophy and the policies? Please explain your answer in detail?

As I look at students holistically and individually, local ~~and~~ policies born of a very narrow conservative view of education, insist on viewing students through numerical test results. Also, many of the policy decisions are made ^{based} on limited knowledge and information about specific educational issues. While I strive to encourage collective decision making where individuals give input before coming to consensus, most policies are often autocratic with little meaningful input. Some of the least meaningful activities in my classroom are dictated by local policy while the most meaningful are ignored or even criticized by the policy makers.

IV. Coping Strategies
A. If there are perceived contradictions between your philosophy and the reality of current policy, how do you deal with these contradictions both personally and professionally? In other words, how are you coping?

There are certain activities dictated by policy that I cannot ignore (ie standardized reading test). I conduct those prescribed duties while voicing my objections. When it comes to deciding what a student needs educationally, I use my experience, education and professional judgement. If there seems to be a conflict between my judgement and a policy, I follow my judgement. I am at a point in my career that if I am forced to follow procedures to which I am philosophically opposed, I will leave the field of education.

E.

B. What are some observations you have made as to how other teachers seem to be coping?

The positive side to the dichotomy between professionals doing what they ~~do~~ know about teaching children and lay decision makers passing ~~policy~~ contradictory policy is teachers look to each other for support. This has been uniting. I also see teachers supporting and justifying what they do. The work and constant conflict is wearing. Teachers continue to pursue education to enhance their skills and validate their work with children.

C. If you were to describe the general morale of your teaching colleagues today, what would you say?

Overall, I would say morale is low. Not many feel validated or supported by administrators and school board members. Educators work hard at remaining positive. To their credit and professionalism, they still bring energy and enthusiasm to the classroom leaving the politics of education outside. ~~the~~

If there is not enough room for your responses, please use the back or attach another sheet of paper. However, please number and letter so as to be very clear about the question to which you are responding.

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR HELP WITH THIS.

Karen

Thesis Teacher Interview Questions - #1

Name F.
(Not to be included in the data)

Date 2-14-00

I. Personal Data

A. What is your teaching history? (How long, where and what levels?)

This is my 19th yr. of teaching. I taught for 5 yrs. in Arizona - 4 in 2nd grade, 1 in kindergarten. In Ketchikan, I taught a 4/5 1 year, a multi-age K-2 for 4 yrs. & this is my 9th yr. in kindergarten.

B. What are some of the biggest changes or shifts that you have observed and/or experienced during your teaching career?

I've seen teaching practices shift from theme based innovative teaching to reliance on textbooks, a broad curriculum to a narrow one, more emphasis and reliance on test scores and more cases of retention when children do not meet grade level objectives.

II. Teaching Philosophy

F.

A. What are some of your strongest held beliefs about learning?

Learning needs to be meaningful. Children learn by doing and they need a variety of experiences to relate to their learning.

B. What are some of your strongest held beliefs about teaching?

Teaching is a continuous learning process. My teaching becomes stronger as I interact with my peers and as I observe the children I work with.

C. How would you describe yourself as a teacher? (Brain-based approach? Constructivist? Traditional? etc.)

I like to think of myself as a constructivist teacher, even though lately I find myself slipping into the "traditional" role. I try not to be the "expert" handing out information, but to provide contexts that encourage self-direction, experimentation, problem solving and social interaction.

F.

III. Current Educational Policies

A. How are current policy decisions affecting you as a teacher? (standards, accountability, assessment, etc.)

For the first time in my career as a kindergarten teacher, my K students will have to take a reading test at the end of the year. We now have a standardized report card which is merely a checklist of skills. The instructional materials purchased and mandated are dull and meaningless.

B. How do you feel current policy decisions are affecting students? (same)

I don't see that it affects kindergarten students, but it definitely affects older students — more stress, fear of retention, higher drop-out rate.

F.

C. Do you see a dichotomy between your personal educational philosophy and the policies? Please explain your answer in detail?

The policies are so narrowly focused - we are not truly educating all children. We don't focus on their strengths, or even try to enhance their strengths. It's all about test scores.

IV. Coping Strategies

A. If there are perceived contradictions between your philosophy and the reality of current policy, how do you deal with these contradictions both personally and professionally? In other words, how are you coping?

I do as much as I can "behind closed doors."
Several decisions that are eating away at me are motivating me to look for ways to leave this district.

F.

B. What are some observations you have made as to how other teachers seem to be coping?

Do the "basic" job each day & go home!

C.. If you were to describe the general morale of your teaching colleagues today, what would you say?

It's pretty sad. I never hear much enthusiasm from teachers any more. The morale hasn't improved since the strike in Nov. In fact, being on strike was a bonding, unifying experience - kind of a high point for this year!

If there is not enough room for your responses, please use the back or attach another sheet of paper. However, please number and letter so as to be very clear about the question to which you are responding.

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR HELP WITH THIS.

Karen

Teacher Interview Questions

To: Karen Eakes

2-22-00

G.

1. Personal data

A. I graduated from college in 1979 and began teaching as a half time teacher that same year. Between 1980 and 1983 I moved around quite a bit and substituted every spring. There was a teacher glut at the time and I wasn't in very high demand. But, because of contracts that insisted that a substitute could not work over 90 days without being offered a contract, I was able to drive a truck and generally screw around from July till December then pick up a long term sub position for the spring. In 1984 I was offered a position teaching 4th grade through tenth grade in a two-room school in southeast Alaska. (Eleventh and twelfth graders were sent to a boarding school in Sitka.) I taught there for two years until the oil prices and enrollment fell through the floor. My new wife and I were then hired to teach in a two-room school in a logging camp on the remote Island of Kuiu. We spent four years there, she teaching K-6 and I instructing grades 7-12 and acting as principal-teacher. With the coming of children we were motivated by some crazy nesting instinct to move to a larger community, which in our case happened to be Ketchikan, Alaska. Here I taught in an open school environment. We team taught multi-grades in what was considered, at least in Ketchikan to be a progressive school. My partner and I taught fifth and sixth grade for four years. When she retired, I decided to transfer to a building closer to my house and one where my own children would attend. I've been teaching different grade levels in this self-contained classroom for six years now and my oldest daughter is one of my most prized students.

I have been teaching 17 years and have taught all subjects at all grade levels 3-12.

I did my student teaching in 1978 with second graders.

B. In seventeen years I've seen many changes. The most recent, and I think the most harmful, is the reliance on standardized test scores to drive the curricula. This reform movement, in my humble opinion is bound to create a less tolerant society in general. And tolerance for uniqueness hasn't exactly been one of our strong points anyway for at least the last 60 thousand years. This movement then, to have every child functioning above the fiftieth percentile in all academic subjects, at least the 'important' ones, is a very damaging idea. We are bound to lose those who are of a more creative mindset. We are bound to lose those who are of a more independent mindset. Anyone who has a weakness in those few intelligences that are measured by a timed, paper and pencil test will be frustrated and in some cases failed.

Who then is bound to be lost to us then by this movement? The creative, the independent, and the 'otherly talented'! These are the precious men and women who we point to and say, "This is who we are." These are our artists, our writers, and creative thinkers, these are our inventors. This movement is a very dangerous mold manufactured by business to fill one specific and mediocre need ---workers.

2. Teaching Philosophy

G.

I believe that children learn those things that they are made to feel are important for them to learn. Therefore, if any learning is to take place the material presented must be made relevant to each student. Sometimes this is the most difficult task a teacher can face. If a teacher is able to display a passion for something that will often help make the student a better recipient and eventually a partner and finally the instigator in their own learning. Students then, need to buy into their education- to make learning their own. I've heard it said that children are naturally curious. I don't think this is really what they are, although it appears so. I believe children are naturally curious about those things that are important to them. Some things are naturally important to most children learning to walk and speak for example will help them survive. To illustrate my point further, all children are not naturally curious about let's say, fire trucks. Those who are tend to be males, usually within a certain age range 2-6. And the reasons for their curiosity are as varied as the children themselves. To some it may be the noise the trucks make. To others it is because their parents seemed to consider the toy worth cherishing, so why shouldn't they? Still others are fascinated by the bright colors or the movement it makes.

So learners will spend energy learning about the things that interest them or that they feel are important to understand, for whatever reason. If a teacher can cause the child to wish to understand or if he can promote a concept to a child in the light of it's relevance to that child's life, then the child will need to know. Needing to know something means that you will become actively involved in accumulating and filing the knowledge away to a retrievable location in your brain.

B. Beliefs about teaching.

The teacher then is the nourisher, the interest enhancer, the salesman of Life Ideas. Now the trouble usually begins after all this has been sold and doled out. The child has cherished the information and stored it somewhere. But where? Where did it go and why can't the child produce it when asked? We teach so many hours and we think our students know what we have taught. It has been made relevant, related to past experience, taught, and reviewed. So where is it now?

The next job for the teacher is to give practice in the art of retrieval, the methods of storing information. Should you act out a scene from the story? Could you write your own story explaining the concept? Tell how you would feel if that happened to you. These are ways in which we help the child internalize the information and reflect it back to us.

By the way, I don't think that the Standardized test does much to promote this reflection of valuable information from the child. In fact, a monochromatic, text-filled page would do little to encourage even the most spartan of thinkers (No offense intended to the Spartans).

C. Myself as a Teacher?

I'm a crossbreed... A constructivist, brain-based traditionalist. So there!

3. Current Educational Policies

A. Affect my teaching.

G.

Besides developing a much thicker skin than any of my non-teaching friends these new policies have had little affect on my teaching. Quite frankly, I close my door and do what is best for kids...so far.

Remember, I'm closer to the end of my career than to the beginning and I can do about anything short of pulling down my pants and still have a job. I'm concerned about kids and have written my share of letters to the editor, but the reality is that we teachers need to do what's best for kids. If a doctor was told that when she goes into the operating room she must only look for one symptom and touch nothing else, would she? If I am told to use a certain text that fails to provide relevancy to my students will I use it? Of Course Not!!

So far I've been able to do what I do because of one of two reasons. Either I had a very good administrator or a very bad one. The good one excuses my methods as being good for kids, and the bad one never noticed as long as parents didn't complain, which, fortunately for me, they didn't.

B. Affecting Students??

Students are getting the short end here. They are being tested more and more each year. The drop out rate is steadily climbing but the school board doesn't seem to be able to figure it out. They were all elected on a "let's raise the bar", platform. So let's raise the bar. We need to find out where the bar is so we test. We need to find out where we want it to be so we test. We want to discover areas of weakness so we test. We want to show that our changes (???) are working so we test.

Our students in third and sixth grade are taking the Gates reading test (spring and fall), The ITBS, the Cat5, the state proficiencies, and any authentic assessments the teacher needs to give. Everyone else takes all these minus the state proficiencies. Weighing the pig doesn't make it any fatter!!

With all this emphasis on test results how can students, and young teachers for that matter, not be affected? I think that the result is that students are infinitely more aware of their inadequacies and are ready to compare themselves with everyone in the world based on their performance on a tool that does not test their true abilities. Sadly, I see no need for this type of self-flatulation unless we are raising a new breed of worker ant/ Jainist monk. If this is truly the desired outcome then leave it for the genetic engineers and get it the hell out of our schools! I regress.

C. Dichotomy?

HA!

Two separate and absolutely different entities. Individualist vs. Communist. The State vs. the state of mind. Creative thinker vs. rote memorizer. Management vs. worker.

4. Coping Strategies

How am I coping?

G

I just keep going. I'm too afraid to stop and think about it for fear that it will pounce on me from behind the closed door. I worry more for my children. Imagine me, a teacher, telling my own kids not to take things so seriously. But this is the reality.

Several years ago, when I was student teaching the school district gave us each a set of metal index card boxes and a fancy hole punch. With this stuff we were given a stack of perforated index cards coated with text so small that most of it was illegible to anyone over forty. Those cards contained nearly every specific skill we were to teach in the second grade. At the end of each quarter we sat down and punched out those skills that we were sure our kids had mastered. The idea was that the next teacher would skewer the whole stack with a metal rod and those kids who weren't proficient would stick on the rod and the others would flutter to the ground like happy butterflies gone to suck the nectar of knowledge.

It was a huge waste of time and energy for naught. It fizzled out and went flat. That was that. Then there were the sets and subsets and new math.

A few things work for me. Hands on stuff, I-search attitudes, cooperative groups, and probably a million little things that I don't even realize started as a trend. But when it doesn't work.. Let it die and bury it. That's what I say about the testing craze and the High School Graduating Proficiencies. Let them die and bury them. We'll all laugh about it posthumously (and the sooner the better).

That's how I cope.

B. & C.

Others complain quietly as if were their lot in life to be a smiling stoic. Moral is down but we seem to unite in our misery as we all love the company. There are no more dear and pleasant people on this earth than schoolteachers. So if we're going to be bashed about, we can take it, as long as we have one another.

I. Personal Data

A. What is your teaching history?

I have been teaching 23 years. I attended Seattle University's education program, graduated in 1977. Student taught at Kimball Elem. in Seattle - an open space, open concept school. I substituted in the Seattle area school districts (mostly schools with population of low income families - my specific choice).

* two year volunteer teacher with Jesuit Volunteer Corps. One year on Crow Indian Reservation in Montana 5th through 8th grade Language arts. While there wrote the language arts curriculum objectives with two other teachers. Second volunteer year at Holy Name school in Ktn., Ak. - 4th grade (25 students)

* Twenty years with Ketchikan Public School District. 5 years Houghtaling school - 3rd and 4th grade; 2 years Valley Park - kindergarten; (one year leave to pursue Masters in Early Childhood Educ.); 5 years Point Higgins - kindergarten and 2nd grd. 1 year first grade at White Cliff Elem.; 7 years at Valley Park k,1,2, and 1,2. Houghtaling and White Cliff schools are closed classrooms. Valley Park is an open space school and incorporates multiage and team teaching.

B. What are some of the biggest changes or shifts that you have observed and/or experienced during your teaching career?

* Studied Cognitive Developmental Theory (graduate school) Studied and practiced Constructivist teaching practices - Attended Univ. of Oregon Masters in Curriculum and Instruction - Early Childhood Educ. My professor trained with Piaget and Kamii. She opened a preschool lab at the Univ. with constructivist perspective. The lab was used for practicum site for graduate students. This was a critical experience in my professional growth as a teacher. Implementing a Constructivist approach was in contrast to the more deeply rooted ways of teaching that typified (typifies) classrooms. Traditionally, learning has been thought to be a "mimetic" activity, which involves students repeating new information. Constructivist teaching practices promotes students to internalize, and transform new information - to construct new understandings.

* Move from textbook driven curriculum to child centered - engaging students, viewing students as thinkers. curricular activities rely more on primary sources and manipulative materials; teaching and learning more interactive; students work in groups as well as alone. Teachers mediate the learning environment rather than acting in didactic manner - disseminating information. Student interests and questions highly valued. (Whole Language, Math Their Way, Science)

* Move from assessment as separate from teaching and occurs through testing to assessment and learning interwoven and occurs through teacher observation of students in process of learning, student products and portfolios. Students involved in assessment. Student-led conferences.

* Resurgence of multiage classrooms

II Teaching Philosophy

A. What are your strongest held beliefs about learning? B teaching?

* Most important in teaching and learning are the student and the teacher.

* Young children are mentally and physically active. Young children are continually engaged in the process of building theories in all domains of knowledge: language, reading, mathematics, art, music and science.

> BELIEFS

= Goals

> ALL CHILDREN CAN LEARN

= Have high expectations for all children

> CHILDREN LEARN BY EXCHANGING POINTS OF VIEW

= Provide many opportunities for collaboration and discussion; allow children to negotiate points of view

> CHILDREN LEARN BY TRIAL AND ERROR

= Encourage and celebrate approximations and risk-taking

> ALL CHILDREN ARE CAPABLE OF DEVELOPING INDEPENDENCE

= Provide many occasions for children to plan, organize and make choices

> CHILDREN LEARN TO READ BY READING

= Immerse children in literature

> YOUNG CHILDREN ARE CAPABLE OF HIGH-LEVEL COMPREHENSION

= Provide opportunities for brainstorming, predicting and inferential questioning

> READING IS DEVELOPED THROUGH STRATEGIES THAT FOCUS PRIMARILY ON MEANING

= Help children develop strategies that utilize context, syntax and phonics

> READING AND WRITING DEVELOPMENT PARALLELS ORAL LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

= Provide daily, self-selected reading and writing opportunities

> SPELLING DEVELOPS THROUGH WRITING ... IT IS DEVELOPMENTAL

= Accept best guess spellings and help children develop a range of spelling strategies

> CHILDREN ARE NATURAL SCIENTISTS

= Provide many opportunities for children to engage in experimentation and problem-solving; value children's experiences, observations and questions

> EARLY CHILDHOOD SCIENCE BLENDS AN EMPHASIS ON PROCESS WITH APPROPRIATE SCIENCE CONTENT

= Emphasize methods and tools of science: observing, predicting, inferring, measuring, classifying, testing, describing

> TO BECOME MATHEMATICAL PROBLEM-SOLVERS, CHILDREN MUST BECOME CONFIDENT IN THEIR ABILITY TO THINK

= Provide opportunities for children to construct their own understanding of mathematical concepts rather than memorizing rules

> MATH CONCEPTS DEVELOP OVER TIME AND THROUGH MULTIPLE EXPERIENCES

= Integrate math during the day, using daily routines, situations and group games

> EVALUATION SHOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH PHILOSOPHY AND PROGRAM

= Evaluate process, product, and attitudes; evaluate children in relation to themselves

> YOUNG CHILDREN ARE CAPABLE OF EVALUATING

= Provide students with opportunities to monitor, reflect upon and evaluate their own progress, learning strategies and products, as well as the learning activities in which they engage

Dear parents,

H.

As we begin the new school year, I would like to share my beliefs about teaching and learning — because what I believe influences how I work with your children.

I think it is important for teachers to have an educational philosophy that is supported by current research. My beliefs and goals about teaching and learning are based on professional reading, courses and workshops I have attended and 19 years of teaching experience.

I believe that it is my job to help nurture the whole child, not just a part of the child. I will be helping children to develop intellectually, socially, emotionally and physically. I strive for students to be successful and feel good about themselves as learners and as individuals.

I also believe that the best theories and practices can lead nowhere without knowing the children. I get to know the children by observing, interacting and responding to them individually and as a group. I strongly believe that empathetic individuals investigating and discovering in a safe community are the biggest influences in the effective functioning of a classroom. We have routines, ceremonies, rituals and celebrations that contribute to developing relationships and community.

Respecting ourselves and respecting others is very important. We celebrate our individual strengths and differences. It is important that children understand that people grow in different ways and at different rates and times. "Quicker" or "sooner" isn't necessarily "better" or "smarter." We work at being empathetic and supportive of classmates who are at different levels, who learn in different ways or who have different needs. We learn to applaud and be proud of our classmates who excel at something. We appreciate and value all efforts. All children are supported in believing in themselves.

I have high expectations of all children. I also understand children are unique and follow their own developmental timelines. Because of this, your child may not be performing as the child sitting beside him or her. I respect and celebrate those differences in children and expect the children to do the same. Children also have their own ways of learning. To help children recognize and build on their strengths and challenge their limitations, we engage in many kinds of activities. Children may be asked to demonstrate what they learned by drawing or writing about it, acting it out, or making a model, as well as traditional methods of assessment.

I also believe that children learn best when they are physically and mentally involved in their learning. When you visit our area, expect it to be busy and perhaps noisy: children are engaged in learning. For example, during science your child may be making an organism habitat with other children, or investigating the properties of solids and liquids (and sometimes making a mess), or observing and caring for one of our class animals. During math, children may be playing a game or using pattern blocks, unifix cubes, beans, or base ten materials to discover more about numbers. Reading time is not silent in Beta Chi: children might be reading with a partner or small group, conferring with me, chanting poems or participating in choral readings or readers' theater.

H.

I believe students need a balance of teacher-directed and student-directed activities. I provide many opportunities for children to make choices and pursue their interests. I don't pretend to teach everything your child learns!

I believe that children should make decisions about their individual work and behavior and in the running of the class. Ultimately, I'm in charge, but the students know it is their class too, not just mine. Everyone must take responsibility for the learning and socializing that goes on in the classroom and for the maintenance of our environment. We discuss and agree together on "rules" that will make a good place to learn. We begin our class meetings with compliments for one another and then work at solving problems individually and as a group.

I also believe children of different ages can learn well together, and this grouping benefits all of the children involved. Younger children learn when their older classmates share their skills with them; older children learn how to explain their thinking to others. The older children also develop confidence and gain valuable leadership skills by working with their younger peers.

I believe children should work collaboratively as well as by themselves. By working in a group, your child will practice the skills of active listening, taking turns, sharing information, and reaching agreement in addition to learning content material. Many times we find out that "none of us is as smart as all of us."

And last, I believe we need to work as a partnership student, parents, and teachers to make this a fun, challenging and rewarding school experience.

I'm looking forward to another great year with families.

C. How would you describe yourself as a teacher?

I am reluctant to assign a label to myself. I probably blend from various theories/paradigms. I'm not sure that I am a purist in any one approach. I include more constructivist pedagogy because of my studies and training in and after graduate school. My own learning experience in elementary and highschool was "traditional". Both influences are long and strong. I believe I'm most removed from Behavioristic teaching practices in theory and practice.

A. How are current policy decisions affecting you as a teacher? (standards, accountability, assessment, etc. H.

Educational Reform

I have been involved in learning about, training others in, and affecting change in the standards movement, curriculum and assessment. Many attempted changes in the last decade were prompted at a grassroots level; meaning teachers initiated and were directly involved, most particularly with instruction and assessment. (The standards movement was not started at the teacher level - but the state of Alaska did involve many teachers.) The perspective of many teachers involved in educational reform is that students are not standardized and teaching is not an exercise in using a cookie cutter.

The current policy decisions in the Ketchikan School District, as elsewhere in the country, regarding standards, accountability, assessment are oppressive. The "policy makers" make them from a framework of failure: *Schools are failing. The intent of current policies is to make teaching failproof.*

Standardized tests and state assessments can affect funding, curriculum, instruction, school quality and climate and children's futures. These tests hold too much power.

Standardized tests and state assessments effectively disempower teachers. And these tests are reduced to what is simple to measure. The consequence - we miss out on GENUINE accountability

How do they affect me? They make me mad! I have worked with various groups, teachers, administrators, policy makers to improve the art and science of teaching, to learn more about the complexity of children and learning. The words standards, assessment, accountability are terms I have embraced and tried to work with. Yes, I should and do have standards, yes I should and do assess, yes I should be accountable BUT these terms and ideas as most educational terms and ideas, are thrown around, analyzed, reanalyzed, scores and "facts" interpreted and misinterpreted and misrepresented to perpetuate the notion that schools are failing. I'm just getting tired of the whole mess. I've have spent countless hours trying to educate parents, school board members, etc about many simple and complex issues regarding teaching and learning. With steps forward there seems more steps backward. A new group to re educate. Look who is in charge of making decisions about teaching and learning in Ketchikan: 7 non-educators. This is a crazy system! 7 people who know little to nothing about teaching - what other profession or trade has a group in charge that knows nothing. ^{abc} Okay, community stakeholders fine, gee, there is even a student representative on the board. Gee, something missing from this picture - NOT ONE TEACHER REPRESENTATIVE on a school board.

The current situation here is demeaning and humiliating. This is unfortunate because I have worked diligently at trying to work with and not against... I have tried to remain positive. During my first 15 years in this district - I felt grateful, empowered, a learner with many opportunities to improve my skill as a teacher. Now? Blah.

B. How do you feel current policy decisions are affecting students? H.

Well, I can't say for sure. I can only make assumptions. But you know the saying "If mama aint happy, aint nobody happy." So I wonder if the discontent among teachers transfers to the students? I'm happy in my classroom - I believe my students are happy. But unnecessary energy is spent on fighting for or against, on keeping what we know is good for children etc, rather than spent on planning and preparing and listening to children.

Teachers are given little to no respect. In fact we are the scapegoats for alleged failures. What do children learn? Do they learn to respect teachers to honor the profession? I think not. How do attitudes translate in the classroom?

Now with the tests students must take. I assume the affects on children are anywhere from stressful (missing hours of sleep, fidgetiness etc.) to tragic.

Curriculum becomes test-driven and therefore narrow, instead of better-educated teachers, policy makers develop "better regulations" - standardized tests, standardized curriculum, scope and sequence for each grade, lesson plans, pacing schedule for teaching and a script - what to say! Children are viewed as future workers (rather than valuing children for children as they are right now - with a right to learn and to learn to think) Teachers are given the tools, the packaged materials and procedures and if the final tests are not satisfactory then more prescribed tools are given and more tests are given. So we have a lot of monitoring of data. The affect? We are not meeting children's needs. Students are not standardized and therefore blanket prescriptions are ridiculous. The affect? Most often students miss out on real learning.

With this assembly view of education teachers don't need professional knowledge, expertise and judgment. Professional development has become in-services with the primary goal of ensuring correct implementation of the prescribed teaching materials. (WE Have such an inservice coming up in April!)

The affect on students? dumbeddown education. Possibly with a low-level thinker in charge. Or with a high-level but frustrated thinker mumbling "Fine is this what they want. Open your books to page ___ and do problems 1 - 20. And keep quiet."

B Observations of other teachers coping.

Kissing up, Grumbling, passive resignation, leaving the profession, moving, taking a year off. Some, and I think they are a minority, agree with the current situation and they seem to be coping just fine because narrow, dull and meaningless are finally back in vogue.

H.
C Describe the General Morale of colleagues.

It would be a generalization to make a statement and certainly biased because my description would reflect the morale of those teachers with whom I discuss issues on a regular basis. The morale of teachers is probably mixed. My assumption is that morale is linked to the number of years taught and /or the experiences in working with school reform. If teachers have been in collision with policy makers; have been involved with and promote teaching for understanding, alternative and authentic assessments that collide with standardized testing policies then these teachers are probably frustrated and display low morale.

We know so much more about learning and how we learn. This informs us as teachers. Unfortunately, what we know does not inform policy makers. This is frustrating for teachers. A brick layer can make decisions about what I use in the classroom but it is getting more so, that I can not.

All in all, there might be less enthusiasm for teaching. (Among "new and old" teachers) There is so much arguing. Too much tension. The job is demanding. Little respect for the profession. And the pay is not so great.

APPENDIX C
SECOND ROUND INTERVIEWS

A.

1. What do you see as some of the pros and cons concerning the current standards movement?

One of the pros of the standards movement, I think, is that it has been an awakening for teachers as far as the higher possibilities for students. And I think this awakening has been needed for a long time - bringing to light to students and to parents, as well as to teachers, what is possible - the body of knowledge that is out there and what students are capable of. Another pro I think is to let us know that we can all set high standards for ourselves, not as something to be punished if we don't reach them, but to always be reaching for something higher and better for ourselves and as a teacher I am constantly learning because I am challenging the students to learn.

One of the cons is that the standards have not been phased in. They have been dumped on us I feel in such a way that it's "This is how you were last year, this is where you have to be this year,"- and if you can't make it, you are either a bad teacher, or the children are to be looked down upon because they are not succeeding. Somebody has failed if these standards are not met in one year or a year and a half since they have been brought to light. Another con is that the standards were not brought in accompanied by resources to enable us to bring these to the children, so that many teachers, myself included, have had to scramble and gather their own materials, which probably are not coherent, fitting together perfectly, may not even be at the children's level, may not hit all the standards, but it's what we have been able to find to get on the road to meeting the standards. So it's been difficult for me to present a cohesive, growing, progressive, developmental, academic program to the children in some areas, when I have had to scrape and scrounge in order to find materials. Another con is that the means of assessment has been narrowed down to a Stanford 9 test, multiple choice achievement, normed not necessarily for our school population here. Comparisons are one indication of how people are doing, but they are not the only indication and they do not always show the type of growth that children

are doing. The Stanford 9 also is not aligned perfectly with the standards that we have been asked to teach so while we have scrounged to get materials to teach the standards, those are not necessarily what the children are being tested on. This discrepancy leads to great frustration as a teacher, and I struggle with not pressuring the students too much, but feeling pressured myself to prepare them to be tested on material that they may or may not know.

2. What do you see as the most serious consequence of the current standardized testing movement?

The standardized testing movement is just one aspect of standards having been introduced and I realize that. But the testing itself, as I mentioned, is not always aligned with what we are being asked to teach. I think the greatest problem with the standardized testing is it doesn't always take into account where the children started, what resources were available, how they learn and the multiple ways that we can assess their learning. And it will somewhat give a stamp of approval to one means of indicating their growth, where as they may have blossomed and stretched and changed and evolved as a person and as a learner and that may never show up.

3. Historically, how have your students ranked on standardized test scores?

On the average, my students have ranked average. I have those who are above, but not topping out and I have those that are below but not bottoming out. I do have some students who because of their personality do well on tests. They can handle that kind of situation and do not feel threatened by it. I have other very creative, intelligent students whose parents have already told me they are crying worrying about this testing coming at the end of April. When I received this class, I was expected to look over each student profile, how they had done on last years tests, to get a picture of my class and see who might need

a new program of intervention. And I must admit that this class, out of 34, 17 or 50% of my class is below grade level, that's below 40th percentile or maybe even the 30th on the Stanford 9 in reading, writing and math. So over all, this is one of the lowest performing classes I have had, although I also have a high percentage performing in the 50th to 60th percentile.

4. What are some of the intangibles that you think should be considered when discussing or evaluating student success?

I interpret intangibles right now as being those things that can't be measured by a standardized test, but they are things that still can be seen or felt or measured in other terms. Some of the intangibles are that a student has gained a sense of him or herself as being a learner and that they have the power, the self-efficacy to tackle anything that might be put in front of them and learn from it. But that can't be measured on a test. Another intangible might be how a child has become more organized during a school year. How a child has gone from being not interested in reading on their own at all, to being someone who can't put a book down and is constantly asking, "Do you think I would like this book? I can't wait to find another book to read." To going from being a child who is afraid of math to a child who goes back and corrects everything they do to prove to themselves that they can learn and master a concept. Sometimes these things do show up on testing, but it is not guaranteed that they do.

5. If you were able to influence policy makers and/or parents, what would your message be?

My message would be let's keep looking at the possibilities of highest quality education, which does mean having standards, broadening the academic base that we make available to students and provide stimulus to take part in. Learn more about history, about literature, extend their

skills as writers, always focusing on the qualities of being thinkers, participants in their learning, questioners. But let's also remember that each person that walks through a classroom door is a whole person. It's not someone who has taken a test and must improve by 5 points. This is a child, just like every teacher who walks through the door is a whole person who should be investing in their own learning with joy and accepting that challenge. And our means of assessment should include multiple ways of expressing what we have learned - through testing, through discussions in small groups, maybe with parents, and community members and teachers and peers - with artistic and musical and literary avenues available for showing what they have learned in science, in social studies. For finding engaging ways of showing mathematical thinking - not just filling in the right blank. For children to gain a sense of loving themselves as a learner needs to be gauged in multiple ways. And the children need to take part in that, feel that they have some say in how they have learned - not being told by someone outside that they have or have not learned. I want to continue looking at higher and better and broader standards for teachers as well as students, but I don't want to slip into the routine or rut that mistakenly identifies people by a number or a percentage growth, because then we have missed most of who this person is, and we are truly limiting the possibilities of what education can be.

B.

1. What do you see as some of the pros and cons concerning the current standards movement?

Well, the way I see it right now, as far as the pros are concerned there is a certain — I think it is good that people are paying attention to schools. I don't necessarily think that the standards movement is the best way to pay attention to schools, but I think it's nice that people somewhere in the state government particularly, are taking a look at schools and seeing what is needed. I also think that the issue of accountability is an important one, I just don't know that the standardized tests as an instrument is the best way to have students show progress and keep teachers accountable. I think in some ways, any time a teacher is offered more money for doing a good job, I think that's okay and sometimes the sound of "oh, your test scores went up, you're going to get more money" sounds pretty good. But I still don't think that's the best place to put the emphasis.

Against the current standards movement, I think it's very antithetical to the way people learn, the way children learn, and to the idea that children have to be put into a box. I think that teachers tend to get to know their kids, if they're good teachers particularly, in ways that measure or assess things beyond their score on a test — any test, even a teacher made test, a curricular test or a standardized test. And so that the students that are being tested, a teacher knows them in ways other than a number. And knows if the baby was just born at home or the parents have come from another country just recently or the grandmother died and what the issues are that effect that child's performance. And even their behavior in school. The behavior issues are another one. There are some children where the scope of their behavior, for whatever reason, cannot sit down and take a standardized test very well and they are evaluated against children who can. And that's very unfair — so I think it's really wrong to put kids in a box and that's the biggest defeating factor. - As far as a movement is concerned, I think it is really in many ways demeaning to teachers because it takes away from the humanity of what they are doing and makes them

statisticians. And that's really limiting in terms of their job.

2. What do you see as the most serious consequence of the current standardized testing movement?

I think it's the mis-information that parents have and the kind of 'feeding frenzy' of "quick, let's make our test scores higher" and throwing the baby out with the bath water, throwing out good educational practices for the sake of raising the test scores, teaching to the test, we have teachers cheating. I think it's this frenzy that the scores have to get higher and everything else gets thrown out. Nothing else really matters.

3. Historically, how have your students ranked on standardized test scores?

It's been mixed. The first four or five years of my teaching career, I was in a highly transient community. There was a high proportion of English language learners. It was a poor community, there weren't many books in the homes, there was an emphasis on being in school and getting an education when the children could, but clothing and money and food on the table were bigger problems. And so the kids had a lot of trouble with the testing and the scores were typically in the 40th percentiles or below with a very small percentage scoring in the average or above average range. In the school where I'm employed now, also for about four and a half years, the student population as a whole, scores just below the national norm. I think we are about 48 or 49 NCEs in sixth grade, that's the grade level that I'm teaching. And again there is a lot of variability, there are a lot of factors involved. We're beginning to expand exponentially at our site, and so as we get new kids in, these are kids who have frequently moved and changed schools more than once - even in a school year - and so we do not expect our test scores to be as good this coming year as they were last year.

4. What are some of the intangibles that you think should be considered when discussing or evaluating student success?

I think that it would be neat if we could speak to a child's maturity level. And that's a very broad term. For say as a sixth grader, whether a kid is a fairly young kid, or fairly grown up. And those are the kinds of things that impact how they perform on different things. I also think it would be neat to measure or examine what they are good at — and to be able to speak to their strengths. For instance I have a kid in my class who is just an outstanding athlete. He's just amazing. He's big for his age. He's very adept physically. He's not very bright with math and reading. He struggles with these things. It would be neat if he could get some recognition and rewards for that. He'll probably be a fine athlete in high school where those things become more important. But in elementary school, he's just a good kid to have on your team. That's about the most recognition that he gets. There are other students who are developed artistically, other students who are developed verbally and there are many who are developed socially and that is never looked at. And those are the kinds of things that would be neat to see — especially as I said — the maturity or the social development — the social skills of the kid.

5. If you were able to influence policy makers and/or parents, what would your message be?

Well, the first one that comes to mind is influencing parents. I would really like to say to the parents a couple of things. I would like to hand them a nice thick handbook on how to parent as far as improving their child's success in education and in the educational environment in general. But as far as state policies and how parents view them, I would like parents to be really scrutinizing about what they see. For example, last year when our test scores were published on the internet, we had a few parents come into the principal's office and say, "this is dreadful, you must do better." And we had other parents come to our school and say " I'm moving my child to your school because you've done so well." Because it's all very relative and they don't know what they're looking at. And I think that's a big factor, because these public policies have

been promoted by the state by non-educators largely, are put together as kind of a quick fix, a band-aid to "the problems of education" These quick fixes are implemented, there's a lick and a promise given, the parents, the voters are calmed briefly, and yet of course they still won't vote any bond issue money toward schools, which is another problem. But they'll be assuaged and the politicians look good and everyone goes home happy, except for the poor teachers and the poor kids because we're stuck trying to implement impossible policies, raise scores to impossible levels. - The other thing that is very significant, but nobody seems to look at is the fact that when you get - I don't care how many kids you get - a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand or a million kids, you're going to get something resembling a bell shaped curve statistically. You're going to get a few highs, a big chunk in the middle and some lows and that's typical. So to say, for a school or a district or a state to say, that we will have all children reading by the third grade or we will have all students achieving 50th percentile by the end of two years is just about statistically impossible. Additionally, I helped on the writing of our school plan this year, and when you look at a percentile and say you're going to go from the 46th to the 48th in one year and two points the following year and two points the next, granted even if you're looking at the matched scores of students who are continuously enrolled, I still get a new batch of kids each year in the sixth grade and there's no guarantee that what the fifth grade teacher taught them is going to help them do better on my test score. So it's a fresh start each school year and each school year statistically isn't going to be any better than the one before. It's always a new curriculum for these kids. The other thing that I would love to say to parents and policy makers - and this is a real big one and it applies much more to primary grades k-3 but it also applies as the kids get older - to remember and remember and remember in everything you do, that one year is a tremendous percentage of the life of child. We are adults for such a lot longer than we are children. We are around from 20 to 80 as adults, roughly, and you're only a little kid for a short time. For a five year old to grow in one year - that's 20% of their entire life. If you're 40, 50, or 60 years old, what's 20% of your life? It's a pretty good size chunk. And this one year's growth that we're asking a child to make represents a great deal and it shouldn't be forced and it shouldn't be

corrupted by some outside influence that says you must do this by this point in time. Children develop at different rates. For example, I have a child who walked at 8 1/2 months. It surprised me. I have a nephew who walked at 17 months. They are both great kids now that they're young men, but, they were different by a large span of time as measured in the life of a toddler. So when we look at these measurements that we are trying to apply to kindergarteners, first graders, through sixth, or eighth, or tenth or even twelfth grade it's very important to remember that we are dealing with children, and not little automatons, not little computer programs that can be pre-set in advance to make a certain goal, to reach a certain level at a certain point in time. This is not a flow-chart, this is a child.

C.

1. What do you see as some of the pros and cons concerning the current standards movement?

A pro that I see is that for a long time in the state of California we have needed to have some kind of standard that children were expected to meet. So that in itself has been a very positive thing. Many teachers chose to not raise the expectations for children and so many children have not been given what I would call an adequate education. As a seventh grade teacher I was teaching handwriting and sentence structure in history because the kids were coming to me without the background. The math teacher was teaching multiplication and division facts, because the kids didn't know their facts. That was a downfall of what had been happening within the educational system. So that, I think, is a pro in that we actually will have standards and that they are going to actually stretch children and teachers more importantly.

The downside is that the standards are not always appropriate for the ages that they have been selected for. Some of the standards are asking for children who are still at the concrete level to be in an abstract level and they aren't there yet. So in the lower grades they've sometimes put in things that are inappropriate. In kindergarten, a child does not have the physical skill of writing. They need to be working with crayons and working with manipulatives so that they gain that skill, yet they are required to write in kindergarten and read in kindergarten where it is not necessary for that to be a part of things. So to me, the trouble is whoever designed the standards, was not thinking about children. They were thinking about "how do we get the schools to come to a higher level, they've got to go for a higher level" which is fine, but inappropriateness will not make the children rise, it will make them feel defeated because they cannot achieve it, because it is beyond their ability at that particular time. I am saddened by that because I feel that teachers, generally speaking, know what children can do at a certain level and can, given the appropriate standards, help the

children to rise to the highest of their ability. But I think they are asking for an impossible task and you are putting the children at risk.

2. What do you see as the most serious consequence of the current standardized testing movement?

I would like the legislators of my home state to take the fourth grade standardized test. I would like to see them pass STAR. I would like to see the administrators who created this as a standard on how to judge schools have to take the test and pass it, because I don't think most adults could do it. That is what I see as the greatest disadvantage to the testing. It is not tied to the standards of the state of California which is inappropriate because how can you prepare children to meet the standards that the state requires when you are also giving them a test that has nothing to do with the standards. And how can you have them be successful when the test is set up for failure.

3. Historically, how have your students ranked on standardized test scores?

In my classes the students have ranked above average and generally in the 70 to 80 range with varying degrees except for those children who have had severe amounts of difficulty such as my Hispanic children who do not know English, or my children with low ability who are required to read for all the different tests which is what a standardized test requires. It is not just a math test, you also have to be able to read it.

4. What are some of the intangibles that you think should be considered when discussing or evaluating student success?

Because I believe in authentic assessing. I think the hardest thing for me is that in a society and a world that

needs children who can think, who are inquisitive, who are literate, who need to be able to work with others and come up with ideas that are not necessarily the standard idea, but because of this I find that the intangibles are areas that no test can measure. No test can show whether a child is emotionally intelligent and able to be successful in life. And we know that emotional intelligence is one of the areas that is most neglected and yet is most significant in whether you will be successful in life. And it is not measured. The ability to work with others, the ability to think differently and go outside to take a risk. Those are things that a child has to be given. They are the self-esteem issues that people don't measure and yet they are the true mark of a winner - not whether you can pass a test or not. That is a skill, passing a test, and it is not necessarily the mark of whether you will be successful in life.

5. If you were able to influence policy makers and/or parents, what would your message be?

Policy makers, I would like them to spend a week with me in my class. I'd like them to see what it's like to be in a room with 35 students - when there are very few breaks and there are very few opportunities for the children to do what they need to do in order to be successful, unless I put it into effect and go against what I am asked to do which is to prepare for testing. If I'm doing true teaching, I would like them to see the difference between true teaching and test preparation. And to me that's a waste of time that I cannot teach my children in the way I feel I should. I would like policy makers to have to sit here and I'd want them to be engaged with the children to see how intelligent they are and how capable they are and how much we are denying them by doing what we are doing.

For parents, I'd like parents to start complaining. I'd like parents to be willing to talk to the legislators since they don't want to listen to the teachers. And I'd like parents to say, "this is not right!" They are the ones who see their children crying at home when they have to spend two weeks in testing. They're the ones who see their kids getting ulcers at an age when it's totally inappropriate

for a child to be so upset about their education. They're the ones who see their children feeling unable to do things. And I would like to have parents also be a part of learning what we're learning about how the brain operates and how human beings learn and let them see the things we are truly learning now that will make it better for children and help them be more capable. And I think that's basically what I would like to do.

D.

1. What do you see as some of the pros and cons concerning the current standards movement?

As I was talking to you earlier, Karen, last year I was on a committee with my district aligning the assessments and the things we already teach in our district to the standards, and I was working with first grade, but I also worked closely with kindergarten. A lot of the things that the standards are asking us to do in kindergarten are not developmentally appropriate with what we know children are ready to learn at any particular time. One thing I can think of in particular is the concepts about print, the kinds of things that they were expecting kindergarteners to know by the end of kindergarten -- that particular test is designed for first graders and we're asking the kindergarteners, the standards are saying they need to know them by the end of kindergarten and we don't expect to see them until the middle or the end of first grade. So those are the kinds of things that concern me. And I see that not only in kindergarten but as I have a seventh grade son, I see the same kinds of things with him. They are expecting him to do algebra and geometry and things that he's not ready for. Some children are, but many of them aren't and he's being forced to do that. Children like him who are in resource programs really have difficulty with that and the support system for them is not always in place. Fortunately for him he's in resource and he's got things modified, but for children who don't make it into resource there's a gap there and I worry about that.

I think the good things about standards is that I think in California for a long time we've had teachers doing a lot of different things, and I think we need to have some things where we say "Let's move the bar up a little higher" and I think you move everybody up. That's good, but there have to be some exceptions too and we have to have safety nets in place for kids. And I think the state is funneling some funds that way, but I don't think it's in place everywhere and I am especially concerned about kids in the inner cities. I'm not only concerned about the kids -- them making it to the bar or anywhere near it -- they're not

going to because they're very very far behind. And I think of the teachers and administrators who are looking like they're doing a bad job and they're not. Teachers do a good and bad job in all districts all over, but it's the teachers in the low income areas that look the worst and they get punished for, you know, they're doing the best job they can - and actually a really, really good job usually, and because their kids can't achieve, they look very poor and that district and those teachers and principals are punished, and I think that's bad.

2. What do you see as the most serious consequence of the current standardized testing movement?

Just like as always, it's a moment in time. It's one test over a weeks period - depending on the district, five days, seven days, four days, It's one indicator of how a child is doing. And when you look at how standardized tests are scored and normed, the normal curve equivalent, you can miss one and it can throw you down into a really low level. You can miss a whole bunch and you can be up there with somebody who is really high and you're really not doing as well as it looks. There are so many variables. And I hate to see kids and teachers and districts ranked according to one week's worth of work. And I think the most serious consequence is we are doing like they do in a lot of east coast states where you're teaching to the test all year long and that's your focus - and it's not on problem solving, it's not on how your going to make it in life, you know, life choices which are part of learning, - it's on "can you take a test." And I hate to see so much time spent on test preparation. I think it's important because all your life you have to take tests, but one test that does so much damage to teachers, children and districts, - I just think we have to rethink how we test and how we create tests.

3. Historically, how have your students ranked on standardized test scores?

This is a tough one, because I really only taught for ten years and when I started teaching in 1990, I was teaching

first grade in a school-wide Title One school. I think the first two years I taught we had to give a standardized test in first grade. Again, I was in a school-wide Title One school and that tells you about the population, so my students did very very poorly, as well as all the other first graders in the school. I had a total of three years of testing students as later I spent three years as the Title One Reading Recovery teacher. And I didn't have any kids that I tested during those years. In those short three years in the classroom and of testing students during those years, they didn't do well. It was all at the same school. We had just begun to make big changes in literacy at the school to affect the kids, but you begin to see the changes in the older kids and not the younger ones and they didn't do too well.

4. What are some of the intangibles that you think should be considered when discussing or evaluating student success?

We have our assessments that we do, the holistic assessments, our standardized tests, - those can measure how a student is doing. But I think we also need to look at the whole child. Where does the child come from? What is their background knowledge? Are they English language learners? Are they in a very low socio-economic area? Those things are part of the child, they come with the child - their baggage, or whatever you want to call it. And I think when we're looking at children, I know it's not good to label children and to say that they're ELL or they're Title One, or they're this or that, but I think that's something the child comes with - I don't know if those are exactly intangibles. I think they're things that we realize, but I don't think we always consider them. And it's not to make excuses for children, but I think it's to say that you can't expect a child who's way behind when they come in to catch up with someone who's way ahead and they're maybe the average student. One of the things I know is you have to make a personal connection with kids. When you make a personal connection with kids, you begin to see them change and become motivated and interested and I don't know how you could measure that but I think it's a really important thing when you're teaching children to make that personal connection. And I've seen kid after

kid, and myself - I've experienced teachers who have made a personal connection with each student in the class and we all did well because we felt like the teacher had some connection with us, that he or she was not going to let us not do well. If we were going to be in that class, then we were going to do well, and we all did. And I think it was a standard that those teachers set that you're in here, you will do well. There isn't going to be "You'll do badly and you'll do badly or you're going to do good and you won't." We're all going to make it because we're doing it together. It was the idea of a community. I think those are important things for teachers to know that one little outreach, saying hello, making that connection, is going to make the difference between a child making it or maybe not.

5. If you were able to influence policy makers and/or parents, what would your message be?

I think for policy makers, and I think it goes for any time we feel critical of someone else's job, that they're just not doing it right - and if only we could be in charge of the world - especially policy makers, though, I think specifically of school boards starting right from the get-go, because they're people who directly affect students, and teachers and districts - and I would say, get into the classroom. And don't just go into one, get into the classrooms and see what teachers are doing. And don't just see a few, see a lot and then talk to the teachers when they're not teaching. And I would say the same thing to parents, and the same thing to the "powers that be" the bigger powers - talk to some teachers and get into the classrooms and see what's going on. Because there really are so many good things going on. And teachers, by in large, I think, do a really good job of trying to help kids learn and succeed. And I think we get so much bad press. And it's not that - You know I hear that teachers need respect. I don't want respect. I want you to see what's happening to the kids. And that's what's important. I think that's what we lose sight of. Come and see what the kids are doing.

Second Interview
March 27, 2000

Monday,

E.

1. What do you see as some of the pros and cons concerning the current standards movement?

Well, on the pro side, I think it makes educators and everybody involved with education reconsider and look at what are the expectations and outcomes for students. And I think it has generated a debate over what should kids know and what should we expect out of them? And what we need to get to those levels and those ends. It brings in the policy makers and the test makers generating the standards tests that they are giving kids at different levels now.

The cons I see, I may be wrong at the state level, but at least locally I haven't seen student involvement in what the standards should be. And I don't in general see education asking students what they think they need coming out of public schools. I think it also limits teacher flexibility and creativity and interest -- both teacher and student -- because now there's a focus on these standards and with the testing you're expected to, you know you need to work towards those standards which can be limiting in other areas.

2. What do you see as the most serious consequence of the current standardized testing movement?

I think it's defining education and I think that's dangerous because it's such a narrow definition. And whenever you define education in any way it limits open-endedness and student and teacher opportunities. But the focus is so much on standardized tests and the pressure and stress of students and teachers to perform on those standardized tests, that I believe a lot of meaningful education is not undertaken. And the other thing, a lot of times I see standardized tests as testing the most superficial areas of thinking. And also, again, students have no input around standardized tests and I think it limits their opportunities to explore other topics and interests. It's too defining.

3. Historically, how have your students ranked on standardized test scores?

Well, I should preface this with I haven't had to do a lot of standardized testing at my grade level until recently. But historically, in the early days of teaching, when everybody took SRA tests and with tests like the Gates-McGinitie, that they generally followed the bell curve. Sometimes I've observed in this community or in my classrooms that there are more kids at the high and low end with a smaller normal middle - but in general, they follow the bell curve.

4. What are some of the intangibles that you think should be considered when discussing or evaluating student success?

Well, I think we really need to look at individual student strengths and many times they're not evaluated by some of the more conventional assessments. One, say leadership. I don't know of any standardized tests or standards assessment that looks at leadership. There are so many ways that teachers look at children in their classrooms. Anecdotal notes, student projects and how kids are working together. It seems that we continually hear what the work force needs and what our kids coming out of schools need is this ability to work with other people and be problem solvers and group workers and I see very little outside of what teachers do to assess those kinds of things. Maturity is something that should be looked at when you're considering and evaluating a student - and also what are appropriate interventions for what a student needs. And again, a standardized test doesn't seem to address those kinds of intangibles.

5. If you were able to influence policy makers and/or parents, what would your message be?

I have a pretty good list I think. One, students need to be involved more in the planning of their education. Not just

in individual classrooms, but at a school level and district level. And if we're looking at state standards, at state levels. That the policy makers should be as broad as possible when they're looking at the ways we view children in schools and view how they're doing in education. And so when you're judging student growth you need to be very broad rather than very narrow and limited. Never make educational decisions based solely on standardized test scores. I think they're poor decisions when you do that and you may identify a problem that maybe isn't a problem. Simplify the curriculum and encourage greater depth of exploration and study rather than throwing everything you can think of into a curriculum and expect it to be covered. It's a shallow coverage of everything. What's the expression? -- "it's a mile wide and an inch deep" or something. And again, have the students involved, and the teachers involved in the curriculum development. Anticipate the student needs not the needs of testing. For policy makers, what I see at the local level, is, if I were speaking to a policy maker, don't put your personal goals ahead of students. And I think most of these policy makers come in with good intentions -- they want to improve education. But they look at it simplistically and I'll measure improvement in a simple, straight forward way. And that's a standardized test -- and then I can know if we've improved education or not and I think that's a dangerous place to be. Because education is so complex and so involved and each individual student is, that to simplify I think is dangerous. Also become well aware of the types of assessments that are in the schools and in education including standardized tests because there's a real problem with policy makers not even understanding what those scores mean or how to interpret them. Sometimes some misguided decisions come out of not even understanding what the test scores are saying, or using test scores in an inappropriate way. Locally, as an example, we have a policy where we're looking at a standardized test in reading and the standardized test tells what the average range for a reader is at a given grade level. Our local board has decided that they should include part of that average range as "at risk" readers. So they identify over 40% of the readers in Ketchikan as "at risk" because they have included one third of the average readers. That seems inappropriate to me.

F.

1. What do you see as some of the pros and cons concerning the current standards movement?

Well, I believe the original standards were created to provide some guidelines for teachers and they were stated broadly. So, I think that's a pro that there are some broad guidelines for teachers to follow. The cons are that these broad guidelines have become too narrowed in their focus by states and districts to the point where I think they are very limiting in their outcomes.

2. What do you see as the most serious consequence of the current standardized testing movement?

I feel probably the most serious consequence is what the standardized tests test for. I don't feel that they test for high level thinking and it's very low level basic knowledge that they're testing for and so that would drive the curriculum and drive the instruction and as a result, I think, teaching and education becomes low level and mediocre.

3. Historically, how have your students ranked on standardized test scores?

Well, I probably can't speak to this one since I teach kindergarten and in the past I've taught first and second grades also. And we've never given standardized tests at the primary level in Ketchikan to this point, so my students have never taken a standardized test.

4. What are some of the intangibles that you think should be considered when discussing or evaluating student success?

Well, when I look at students' success, I like to look at growth over time. I want to see what level they're at when they enter my classroom and then how much they've grown.

For instance, I want to look at their writing and their reading level. I would look at performance types of assessments and work samples. I guess if I were evaluating student success, I'd be looking for ways that show that children are excited about what they're learning, performing what they're learning, modeling what they're learning instead of just answering questions. I'm more interested in how kids perform. For instance, in respect to reading, are they learning just how to read or are they reading for information and for enjoyment or are they just reading a passage and answering questions. In Math, are they learning how to solve problems and how to mentally figure out answers or are they just doing algorithms? In areas of science are they making observations and hypothesizing and experimenting, or are they just reading something out of a science textbook and answering questions? To me that's more a model of student success - the actual thinking processes that are going on and if children can show that they're practicing what they're learning.

5. If you were able to influence policy makers and/or parents what would your message be?

I would want policy makers to stop narrowing education and looking more at the whole child. What kind of an education can we provide that's going to develop each and every child's strengths and not crank them out into one mold that says they have to score at this percentile or have to pass a certain exam to go on to the next grade, but to make education more child centered and to look at developing the whole child. And parents, what do you want for your child? Do you want an education that is going to allow your child to be a productive citizen and to contribute? - and frankly I guess I'm not sure how these policies could be made, but they don't seem to be written in a way that really adds to the education of children. Currently, they seem to be leaving a lot of kids out, and I think we are going to have a problem because we are going to have children out there who are not useful, and are not feeling useful and then what are we going to do?

G.

1. What do you see as some of the pros and cons concerning the current standards movement?

I don't see very many pros at all. The cons -- whose standards are we trying to teach to and why are these standards more important than other people's standards? When you have a whole lot of people saying that this is the important subject and this is the area or height of acceptable performance and above -- anything below that is unacceptable in this performance standard, it disregards any student individuality or learning styles. So when you put standards together and you think about -- this is what everyone should be able to do -- it's a mold that everyone can't possibly fit into because we're so unique and we totally lose any idea of what makes a person unique and rich and whole and we're missing great parts of the personality and we're putting emphasis on such a small section of what we need to know as people anyway. So as far as standards, I'm against the idea of standards completely. I understand that we do have to have some measures and we need to keep parents informed of where their students are and students need to be informed of what their strengths and weaknesses are, but I think we can do it without a broad based 'everybody has to fit into this category' approach to education.

2. What do you see as the most serious consequence of the current standardized testing movement?

A standardized test, in and of itself, is relatively harmless. Something a kid will walk into and four hours later they'll walk away from. But to take that performance on a given day in a given state of mind and to reflect that child's complete educational background from that one assessment is dangerous and it's harmful and it's very inaccurate. And how you use those tests then, is the most important and dangerous and inaccurate thing that you could do. So the way the tests are used at the end, the comparative student to student, school district to school

district, school to school, using that test then to say that our students are generally lousy at one thing or good at something are both really not very fair assumptions because maybe that test matched our curriculum and maybe it didn't match what we were teaching in the classroom and it has nothing to do with actual student achievement, it only has to do with how a group did on a particular day. So using the test to compare students and to give them ideas on who they are and where they stand in the whole spectrum of life and make that an important thing for them is dangerous and I don't think students should have to be told that they are 32nd percentile in spelling.

3. Historically, how have your student ranked on standardized test scores?

Hummm. Historically, my students have ranked about in the 50th percentile. I think for some reason, my students have never done very highly in capitalization, punctuation and spelling and I don't know why. Maybe I don't care about those as much as the testing people do. But they've been pretty much average scores. There's no real deficiencies in my opinion. As a group, when you look around at the people who are coming out of school who have given it the average effort they are well rounded individuals.

4. What are some of the intangibles that you think should be considered when discussing or evaluating student success?

Student success often times won't really appear until they are no longer students. When students enjoy school, and how do you tell if they enjoy it - if they are happy, if they like to participate - then the school is being successful. If the students feel safe in their environment and want to learn. If you see a child who wants to go to the library to get more books and someone who says, "I love math" - those to me are the successful ones. - Kids with a work ethic that enjoy producing something of quality and sharing that. That is very successful to me and it doesn't matter how they scored on any test. Those are the kids who are going to be successful in life,- unless we keep telling them they are not going to be because of their test scores.

But those kind of work ethics and I don't know -- they've even got something moral about what they are doing. And they can always feel, you can tell this is an honest- you know -- all those things that we appreciate when we talk about adults -- honest, hard-working, fair, compassionate. Those kind of words. We need to use these same words when we talk about students and then we'll know that we have a successful student. And there's not a test in the world that can ever test that.

5, If you were able to influence policy makers and/or parents, what would your message be?

My message would be that you need to go back -- and I'm not saying to go 'back to the basics' -- I'm saying go back to a time and a place where the individual was respected for their individuality -- a time where, it would be, I would call it, a 'new renaissance' in education where every student was taken as far as they were able to go, where we could find the things that they really appreciated and use those for spring boards to teach them other subject areas. Where we didn't have little slotted curriculums and where things were broad-based. Yes, it would be like the Renaissance. People who were good in some things would be led in those directions and then we could build from those strengths -- and I think that's what we fail to do is build from strengths. We seem to say, "these are the weaknesses, these are the weaknesses, this is what you need to work on" rather than "this is what you're good at and from here we're going to take you into an area where you can be successful and some of those things that you're not so good at are going to come along because we're using something that you're really interested in for making it relevant and meaningful." And -- there is no standardized test for that I'm sorry to say -- I'm happy to say.

H.

1. What do you see as some of the pros and cons concerning the current standards movement?

Well,... the pros, I think possibly that the standards could be used as a guide. I look at them as a benchmark, but I think the current standards movement as it is, is too narrow. I think broad standards would be even beneficial. I'm not so sure that it's standards that are the issue, but it's taking that thing, that process, and it's how policy makers or administrators and how they are interpreted or misinterpreted or represented. And I'm trying to think if I'm trying to look for a pro because I did work on the standards movement for the state of Alaska in science. When I worked on it, it was a collective group of people, teachers working with a variety of age groups and with a variety of experience levels, it was business folks in the community – a variety of stakeholders, but the majority were teachers. The leadership in the state at the time, knowing her background and her belief system – the paradigm from which she was working was more in line with the paradigm from which I work in the classroom. And so it was a very collaborative process, the standards were broad and I watched those standards in science go out to the public and get analyzed and be rejected because they were broad and terms that flew in the face of people such as "valuing what scientists do" were rejected because that was a 'touchy-feely'. So it wasn't the standards – it was how they were viewed by some people in the public and by law-makers. And I watched the standards get re-written. They had a new group come in and take the original standards and rewrite them. And they became very narrowly focused – and I think that was very unfortunate. So something that could have been a pro – a guide for educators. I disagree with national standards, but I think having local standards, I think I have standards in my classroom – I don't think that's wrong. I think what's wrong is what we do – how we develop them and how narrow they have become.

So the cons, I think basically the biggest ones I can think of is when the standards become grade by grade. They have become more about skills and facts and not really about

what kids know in terms of what they have truly learned. I think the standards truly undermine what children actually learn. I think everybody agrees that we want to have a standard of children being able to learn and value learning and be curious and keep that. But what the standards movement, as I see it, has really done is undermine that whole process. So what we all might agree is a long term goal -- the current standards movement is undermining that. I think they emphasize achievement versus learning and deep thinking. I think they emphasize achievement and they've become narrow because that's what can be tested. What is observable is easier to test. I think they're negative because we've lost our focus. I think the focus should be on the children. We should be listening to kids and seeing what questions they have and what their interests are -- not to say that there aren't things that the kids should learn, I do believe that, but I think we can have both. I've watched teachers in my own building become preoccupied with how well the kids do on tests and I think that has undermined their own intelligence as teachers and their own creativity about what they have done in the classroom. The focus has become how well the kids have scored on the test and not what the kids are doing in the classroom outside of those tests. I think that it takes away our helping children to see and value that it is a value to try to figure things out. So the focus again, for standards and testing those standards is testing the end result and not what's happened to get there -- the thinking. Not the wonderful thing of a child sitting down and figuring something out. What's important is if the answer is right or wrong. So we've lost something there.

So to recapitulate, I think they undermine student interest in learning. And I think that is very powerful when kids are in school. And I think that's undermined the whole interest -- and I know interest is a fuzzy word out there for some groups and I think that's a shame that it's become a fuzzy word. I think students' become labeled as failures and that's a very negative impact of the standards. I think -- I'm not sure about this -- but I think it's possible that students when they're given a standardized test or they're held to a certain standard at a state level, then it almost becomes a minimum competency level. Students then would refrain from challenging themselves further. And I think that's a negative result of standards. I think it can reduce the quality of learning -- or what is going on

in the classroom. It focuses on the end result and not really the action of learning. I think, and I have watched this with my own son, kids then translate scores into either being smart or dumb. And that has a negative impact on kids who don't do well, but I also think it has a negative impact on kids who do well such as my son. I think he really is a curious person, but I've watched him throughout his elementary years, and without having specifically asked him, but I've watched him and my perception is that he is more focused on grades and test scores now because grades are now part of our reporting system at the school and they didn't used to be. So that if this smart child who does normally very well on tests, if he does go from 100% to a less score, I have even heard myself say "gee, how come you got a 98 instead of 100" you know and I've heard him say that too -- so the message is "there's something wrong in getting a great score of 95 or 98" and you're less smart for doing that and so then that score becomes who they are instead of looking at their effort and what they did to get the score -- whether it's a failing score or a non-failing score. I think the other negative about standards is that they are uniform. I think they should be broad and local. But the standards that exist now are uniform and they are very specific and very detailed and I watched that happen in our own state of Alaska. And I was a part of what used to be a broad standard and watched the public analyze and reanalyze them to death and the policy makers not approve those until they became detailed and specific. And still now, we have the state standards, and when I work on committees such as math or language arts, our own school board dismisses the state standards as being too broad. Anyway, standards imply that all students need a uniform package to learn, that excellence in education means uniformity and I disagree with that. I think standards disregard individual differences and they disregard the rates of development. There's a huge body of research that now acknowledges and that we have embraced but policy makers have not embraced that body of research, or if they do, the policies they set are in conflict with the research. I think grade by grade standards are wrong. And I think that kids can be branded as failures. I think we can liken it to a kid learning to walk and this is an old issue, so if your kid doesn't learn to walk at nine months -- is your baby a failure because someone else's baby did -- or the same for potty training or anything else. All the sudden when they hit school they

are failures if they don't reach a certain standard by the time someone else does. I also think standards give the illusion that the more facts a kids knows, the better educated they are. When we focus on the facts, we lose the deeper thinking and I think we need to start with the deeper thinking and kids will learn the facts.

2. What do you see as the most serious consequence of the current standardized testing movement?

The consequences are anywhere from stressful to tragic. For one, it disempowers teachers and it's not about the power teachers have in the classroom, but it disengages teachers from their profession and that is the art and science of teaching, And when you do that you rob children of genuine learning. And I think that is probably the most serious consequence. Because if our job is about educating children, what we have done is undermine that whole process and I would attribute that to standardized testing.

3. Historically, how have your students ranked on standardized test scores?

You know I've been teaching primary for the past ten years and fortunately in our district they have not had to take standardized tests -- until the past two years when they have had to take the Gates McGinitie. Interestingly enough, early in my career, when I taught first grade at Valley Park School, we did have to give a standardized test back in 86 or 82. A few years after the fact, when our district was going through a struggle over math programs, precision teaching math, our superintendent reminded me that my kids had scored first in the district back then. I don't remember what kind of math I was teaching, I think it was finger math, memorizing whatever, but what the kids learned though is another question. But I would say that on something like the Gates, my kids reflect what happens with most kids. There's going to be a percentage that scores at the lower end, a percentage at the middle and at the top. I don't know if it is a dismal view, but I think it will always be that way because that's human nature. There will be some at the bottom, the middle and the top and I would

challenge anyone that said all their students were at the top.

4. What are some of the intangibles that you think should be considered when discussing or evaluating student success?

Well, I think knowing if a student has a conceptual grasp of a concept is hard to test. So when I'm evaluating a student I think it takes one on one talking to a student, watching and observing. I think it's hard to test whether a student can look up facts, interpret them, connect them, analyze them. I think the capacity to acquire knowledge and then use it in new situations is important and is hard to test. But I think most importantly, a child's happiness in and outside the classroom is critical to how they perform. And that is usually not testable. Students flexibility. I think in life that is important, I think we know that as adults so I think it's important to help a student if they're not flexible, become flexible. Making choices, those aren't things that are tested. Organizing. Organizing thoughts and materials. A deeper level of understanding. I think I gain that from listening to kids. Kids' ability to adapt, old information to new situations. Critical thinking. I think problem solving skills. They are developing new measures, but I think it's hard to test. I have always remembered a quote from Jonathan Kozol about filling children's hearts with joy. It sounds fuzzy, but how much joy a child has is something that we don't test and I think it's really important especially when we look at the lives of children and what they have to go through and what we want for them as adults.

5. If you were able to influence policy makers and/or parents, what would your message be?

I would start with a question. I would ask parents and policy makers, if I was in charge of the world right now, I would ask them "What is the purpose of school?" and I would want them to reflect on that. And I bet that they want something similar to what I want -- the majority. But there is probably a minority, now I'm convinced after working in this district, that wants kids to know the facts and that's it. But I think the majority would come to a consensus.

So I'd ask the question, "What is the purpose of school?" Then I'd ask, "What do you want for your child? What do you want your child to be when they grow up? What do you want them to be like? Because I think it's all well and good for us to talk about what we think should be happening to kids out there in the community, but what do we want deep down for my child? What's the long term goal? And how would you want people to describe your child or my child?

knows all his multiplication facts and he learned them in fifth grade. That's not what I want long term. Yes, that's important, but And I would tend to think, I tend to believe, and maybe this is the naïve part of me, that most people probably want long term goals similar to what I want. Then I would ask, "Do we want our kids to have better schools than we had?" I went to a conference once where the presenter asked people to think about their own school experiences and I thought "That was pretty powerful!" and I would copy that and ask people to do that. Most of us decided that we wanted something a little different. Not that it was all bad, not that you'd throw out the baby with the bath water, but.... I think after asking the questions, I'd probably ask "Are our schools in sync with what our long terms goals are?" Because I think there is a similarity in terms of what we want for children, for what we want the long term goal of education to be, but there are differences in how we get to the goals. So I think we need to decide on which paradigm matches up with what parents and teachers believe about schools. And then if I was in charge and they still let me speak, I would say to policy makers that teaching for understanding is what we are supposed to be doing. That's what I believe. I think that we need to start looking at children more closely We have to start where the kids are and work from there. We don't start from the standard and work backwards. I do believe that we need to find out what kids need, And that's usually on an individual basis. You look at broad benchmarks and look at individual needs and individual interests too. The point of view that is almost always forgotten is that of the child. And I would address that if I got to speak to policy makers. I would also talk about the fact that there are different knowledges. Some is social and it is just transmitted and you pass it on and you say "here, memorize this and let's get on with it". But some knowledge cannot be absorbed. It needs to be constructed. And that's where I probably get in trouble because that is the complex issue here and constructivism

is so misunderstood and so misrepresented right now. So I probably wouldn't go into that. I would insist that my job is to stimulate minds and to engage minds and not have kids just be passive. I would ask why a child comes to school so curious and so interested when they're so young - and I get them now because I'm teaching primary - and the love for learning is contagious and then I want to know what happens..... you know, what happens along that education continuum and that as we exit children, that love for learning is gone. And I'd ask those policy makers how they'd contributed to that?

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